

# **Training a New Generation of Leaders in International Agricultural Trade and Development**

Project Director: Andrew Muhammad, Ph.D.

Co-Director: Tom Gill, Ph.D.

Grants.gov Tracking Number: GRANT13590822

Proposal Number: 2022-04931

**Annual Report:** January 2024 – December 2024 (includes September – December 2023)

## **Project Summary**

Agriculture plays an important role in international diplomacy due to pressing issues affecting food systems, food security, and international trade. This is evidenced by the activities of federal agencies to develop foreign markets for American farmers, as well as providing food and agricultural development assistance to low-income countries. These activities shape how the U.S. government engages foreign countries and how USDA and USAID implement international programs.

Graduate training is needed to prepare a new generation of leaders for the international agricultural arena. This National Needs Fellowship (NNF) proposal is designed to support six master's students in International Trade and Development from fall 2023 to summer 2025. This training will develop Fellows' analytical and leadership skills through classroom instruction, a Special International Study in Southeast Asia (Cambodia and Vietnam), international thesis research, and professional development to address a critical employment shortfall and need for USDA, i.e., the need from more individuals equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to advance global opportunities for American agriculture.

This project also seeks to expand and diversify the pool of qualified candidates for federal employment by recruiting fellows from underrepresented groups and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). The proposed training program is designed to meet the Targeted Expertise Shortage Area (TESA) Agricultural Management and Economics and addresses two relevant disciplines for this NNF funding cycle: M. Agricultural Marketing and Management and I. International Agriculture. This fellowship program will establish the foundation for a new M.S. program at UTIA to train future cohorts in these areas of critical need.

This report includes all activities in the calendar year 2024, as well as planning activities for the last quarter of the 2023 calendar year. The report includes activities throughout the year based on the proposed training program.

**Table 1.** Overview of fellowship program components

<b>Academic Training</b>		<b>Completion and Date</b>
<b>Core M.S. courses</b>	Required M.S. courses for Agricultural Economics (AREC) or Agricultural Education (ALEC) programs.	Completed all coursework for respective MS programs December 2024
<b>Cohort courses</b>	Specialized courses in international agricultural diplomacy: policy, international trade, development, and extension, and UN Sustainable Development Goals.	ALEC 585 <i>Global Sustainable Development Goals</i> (completed December 2023). AREC 593 <i>International Agricultural Trade</i> (completed December 2024)
<b>International research</b>	Fellows' theses will focus on a global agricultural issue, including international trade or developing/extension in a foreign country context.	In progress. See this annual report for details.
<b>Special International Study (SIS)</b>	Two-week study abroad in Southeast Asia, providing contextual understanding of international trade (Vietnam) and extension/development (Cambodia).	Completed January 2024. See this annual report for details.
<b>Professional Development</b>		
<b>Leadership training</b>	Fellows will participate in Executive Seminar Series, shadow faculty mentors, and organize a special conference session.	Completed fall 2024 semester. See this annual report for details.
<b>Mentorship and pipelining</b>	PIs and advising committees will mentor Fellows. Fellows will participate in academic conferences and professional exchanges that will expand their networks and help plan a career path.	In progress and ongoing. See this annual report for details.
<b>DEI training</b>	Fellows will participate in DEI trainings and gain cross-cultural skills through SIS, international research, and foreign language coursework.	DEI training to be completed in spring 2025.

## 1. NNF Fellows

Based on recruitment efforts we were able to accept 7 students into the program in fall 2023. Note that two students come with their own funding which allowed for accepting an 8<sup>th</sup> student in fall 2024. The student bios are listed below for the first cohort. Four students are in the M.S. program in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications (ALEC) and three are in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AREC).

**Kortni Blalock (AREC)** is a first year M.S. student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville majoring in Agricultural and Resource Economics. She obtained her BS degree from North Carolina A&T. Originally from Conyers, Georgia, she began working for USDA-FAS in the summer of 2022 as a part of the USDA 1890 National Scholar program, where she was an intern in the Trade and Economic Analysis Division. In December 2022, she was selected by Howard University to be a part of the first cohort of the FAS International Agricultural Fellowship. The fellowship includes development opportunities and mentorship for her during her internships and graduate semesters. Her goal is to continue strengthening her research skills throughout graduate school and enter the FAS Foreign Service where she can continue her passion for global food security, international trade, and policies that help feed the world.

**Michelle Boutell (ALEC)** is pursuing a career that promotes food system resiliency through informed leadership and accessible education. She holds a B.S. in International Agricultural Development with a minor in South Asian studies from the University of California at Davis. During her time at Davis, she worked for the USAID Horticulture Innovation Lab, and saw how impactful access to agricultural information and technologies could be for project partners. Michelle also has experience working with Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization in the faith-based non-profit sector and has been responsible for teaching translator-facilitated postharvest workshops, writing scientific communications, and handling cross-cultural business negotiations.

**Caroline Brooks (ALEC)** has a background in agriculture, leadership, business, and communications. She has held multiple internships, including a communications internship at the Tennessee Beef Industry Council, a customer experience internship at Farm Credit Mid-America, and a workforce preparation-focused student employee position in the Tennessee State 4-H office. She has also served as a Collegiate Facilitator representing the UTK Collegiate 4-H and FFA Club at the National 4-H Summit on Healthy Living in 2020 and 2022. Caroline holds a B.S. in Agriculture Communications with a minor in Food and Agriculture Business from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

**Natalie Crisci (AREC)** is a first-year graduate student pursuing an MS in Natural Resource Economics at the University of Tennessee in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Her studies in Natural Resource Economics are paired with a focus in International Trade and Development as a part of the USDA National Needs Fellowship. She completed her undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering as a student in the Honors College at the University of Alabama with a concentration in Water Resources and Environmental Engineering, along with minor studies in Italian: Language and Culture. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she was a member of the Randall Research Scholars Program which enabled her to take part in a variety of

research projects in collaboration with exceptional faculty members. Those research opportunities allowed her to explore her academic interests ranging from transportation engineering to environmental engineering, and on to the broader impacts of modern agricultural practices on water resources. She joins the UTK AREC program excited to delve into the economics of water resources and agriculture, along with the global implications of economic policy.

**Hannah Donahue (AREC)** grew up in Jonesborough, Tennessee and is a first-year graduate student at the University of Tennessee, pursuing my master's degree in Natural Resource Economics. She completed her bachelor's degree in Natural Resource and Environmental Economics with a minor in Economics from the University of Tennessee in May of 2023. During her undergraduate career, she worked on projects concerning local food insecurity and food access in Knoxville, TN. Her research interests include food security, natural resource management, and how food and water systems can adapt to climate change. She is ultimately interested in approaching these complex issues from a policy perspective. She believes that the National Needs Fellowship in International Trade and Development will allow me to gain a broader perspective on how these issues interact on a global scale.

**Ana Maria Greenberger (ALEC)** is a first-generation Mexican American seeking to better understand the agrifood system on a national and global level. She has worked and lived in Israel, completed USAID Farmer-to-Farmer assignments in Cambodia, and currently works for a farmer-supported non-profit organization in Appalachia. She is particularly passionate about food and nutrition security, and how she can contribute as a leader and educator for positive community development. Ana holds a B.S. in Community, Environment and Development with a concentration in International Development and a minor in International Agriculture from the Pennsylvania State University.

**Makenzie Smith (ALEC)** is a first-generation college student with an agricultural communications, business and policy background. She has served under US Congresswoman Kat Cammack addressing issues of public policy and crisis management communication. Her background in agriculture extends from private industry in produce packing and shipping to academia and government with the University of Georgia and the USDA in peanut research. Makenzie holds a B.S. in Agriculture Communications with an Agribusiness minor from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.



**Figure 1.** Co-Director Tom Gill (far left) and PI Andrew Muhammad (far right) pictured with the 7 NNF Fellows (fall 2023 cohort). NNF Fellows from left to right: Kortni Blalock, Caroline Brooks, Natalie Crisci, Hannah Donahue, Michelle Boutell, Ana Maria Greenberger, and Makenzie Smith

Note: NNF Project: Training a New Generation of Leaders in International Agricultural Trade and Development. Grants.gov Tracking Number: GRANT13590822; Proposal Number: 2022-04931.

Based on discussions with the NNF program director, we recruited an additional student to the AREC M.S. program in fall 2024. As mentioned, two students came with their own funding, which allowed for an initial recruitment of seven fellows instead of six, and an additional 8<sup>th</sup> fellow the following fall (Lindsey Hickok-Perry).



**Lindsey Hickok-Perry** is a first-year master's student in the University of Tennessee's Agricultural and Natural Resource Economics Department with a specific focus in natural resource economics. She obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee with a major in economics. Currently, she is working on her thesis about how water quality impairment status affects GDP growth/tourism expenditures. She hopes to pursue a PhD in economics.



## 2. Special International Study (SIS) (January 2024)

The Special International Study (SIS) is major component of the training program, The SIS occurred January 4–18, 2024. This two-week study abroad in Southeast Asia provided contextual understanding of international extension and development (Cambodia) and international trade (Vietnam). The Fellows, Project Directors, and staff from the Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture (Smith Center) attended the SIS. Smaith Center staff assisted with logistic and provided student support during the trip. Smith Center Support Staff participating in the SIS: Mary Shelley-Snell (left) who is the Smith Center’s Global Communications Leader, and Morgan Leigh Owens (right), who is the Smith Center’s F2F Program Manager. See the appendix for the complete itinerary. The SIS provided a unique experience for students to engage with individuals in Cambodia and Vietnam. Students interacted with faculty from multiple institutions in the US and Cambodia, as well as government agencies, NGOs and farmer producers, and was exposed to the research process and field visits to agricultural demonstration sites.

*Photos from Cambodia and Vietnam*







### Student testimonies (selected) about the Special international Study abroad

*(1) The travel to Cambodia and Vietnam with the UTK National Needs Fellowship cohort was an unforgettable experience. Upon arrival in Cambodia, we spent the first day exploring Phnom Penh, and we visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. Visiting the memorialized site of an atrocity, especially of this scale, was sobering. It was invaluable to begin the trip with the recognition that this tragedy is so fresh in the country's memory.*

*The following days, we explored the markets which scatter Phnom Penh, and I was amazed by how lively they were. The sense of community between vendors was palpable: they all wanted one another to succeed, and everyone was willing to help their neighbor. Walking around the city, I noticed how the streets were always filled with people. This sense of interconnectedness is something that I have missed since returning to the U.S.*

*On one of our final days in Cambodia, we visited the Cambodian Landmine Museum, near Siem Reap. This visit was stirring, and it contextualized our standing as American tourists, as well as the socioeconomic status of the country. Learning about how the*

*active landmines still prevent agricultural activity in much of Cambodia and Vietnam helped me to better understand the impossible position of farmers and their families in Southeast Asia and beyond.*

*We then traveled to Vietnam, where we met with a lumber importer, a furniture producer, and a woodworker's association. It was interesting to meet with people from various sectors of this thriving industry, and again, the sense of community was beautiful. In place of competitiveness, the attitude was, "when one of us wins, we all win." On our last day in Vietnam, we went on a guided tour of the beautiful Mekong Delta. The tourism industry around this beautiful site is thriving. Our visit to Southeast Asia is an experience that I cherish, and the opportunity to immerse myself in these cultures has undoubtedly changed my worldview.*

*(2) During our two-week trip to Southeast Asia, it was exciting to learn about the history, cultures and cuisines of Cambodia and Vietnam. In Cambodia, I enjoyed interacting with the local high school students who, as part of their curriculum, were learning innovative agricultural techniques that they could use to economically improve the lives of themselves and their families. Additionally, during a visit to a pepper farm in Cambodia, I appreciated learning about how they were establishing themselves in international markets with peppercorn exports, how they were setting themselves apart in their local markets by growing relatively rarer crops, and how they were looking to expand their business by introducing value-added products, like pepper jam, to their production system.*

*In Vietnam, it was great to meet with local business owners who displayed a clear passion for improving Vietnam's economic outlook on a global scale. Additionally, I appreciated the time that the FAS Agents in Ho Chi Minh City were able to set aside for us to learn about the work that they are doing in Vietnam. I enjoyed being able to ask them questions about their work, and a little bit about their careers, as I look towards my own future career in agricultural and natural resource economics, with a focus on international trade and development.*

*One major thing that stood out to me, in both Cambodia and Vietnam, was the lack of clean drinking water available to local residents. I learned that the Mekong River is one of the most heavily polluted rivers in the world and that tap water, if available, is likely not treated by a water treatment plant of any sort. Through this, the locals are completely dependent on bottled water as their only source of safe drinking water – which through a sustainability lens, looks to be a huge area for dramatic improvement. Overall, this trip opened my eyes to a variety of regional and global issues that I would not have been aware of without this opportunity, and I am very grateful that I was able to participate in this trip.*

*(3) My study abroad experience to Southeast Asia is one that I will always hold dear and dear to my heart. With this being my first time abroad, I really was not sure what to expect, but I am so thankful to have had this opportunity. I had the incredible opportunity*



*to experiences culture far different from mine and I was able to learn about what the agricultural industry looks like within a different part of the world.*

*All around, Cambodia was my favorite part of the trip. We had the chance to be involved with a variety of different activities relating to their culture. From visiting Silk Island to witnessing the Cambodian circus, the new experiences never stopped. This trip has forever changed my view on international travel and my views on the emersion of differing populations.*

*Our last day in Vietnam was one that will not soon be forgotten. On this final day, we were able to visit in my opinion, one of the most beautiful places in all Southeast Asia, this being the Mekong Delta. This trip had multiple highlights, including a honey tasting, scenic boat rides, endless coconut drinks, and a lunch complete with the optional hammock nap. We also had the opportunity to take in the natural ecosystem and interact with some of the wildlife. This last day on the Mekong Delta was the best way we could have ended our trip abroad.*

*Not only was it nice to take in some more relaxing activities, but it was even better to enjoy each other's company and to do this while enjoying the natural entertainment that Vietnam has to offer. Our trip also ended with a quick tour of some temples that added to the tranquility and knowledge gained from our trip. This final day in Vietnam helped to solidify all of what it has to offer as a nation outside of a skyscraper setting. The experiences of this day will follow us for many years to come and serve as a reminder as to the true meaning of our trip.*

### **Individual study abroad**

Ana Maria Greenberger (ALEC) traveled to another country instead of Southeast Asia, which is allowed under the proposed program. She traveled to Guatemala in June 2024. She conducted interviews related to her research (see section 4).

Lindsey Hickok-Perry will complete this requirement in spring 2025. She is schedule to travel to Belize (Central America) to participate in research and learning on the relationships among wildlife, cacao production, and forests through cultural immersion, presentations, field experiences, and numerous hands-on research activities.

**Special International Itinerary**

Date	Agenda
Jan 4, Thursday	Travel to Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Jan 5, Friday	Arrive in Phnom Penh
Jan 6, Saturday	Rest/ cultural day
Jan 7, Sunday	Cultural day / orientation / travel to Kampot
Jan 8, Monday	Kampot/Kep
Jan 9, Tuesday	Kampot/Kep and return to Phnom Penh
Jan 10, Wednesday	Travel to Siem Reap via Kampong Cham
Jan 11, Thursday	Siem Reap
Jan 12, Friday	ATP/School Tech Park
Jan 13, Saturday	Temple Day
Jan 14, Sunday	Fly to Ho Chi Minh (AM); free afternoon
Jan 15, Monday	Ho Chi Minh
Jan 16, Tuesday	Ho Chi Minh
Jan 17, Wednesday	Ho Chi Minh
Jan 18, Thursday	depart; arrive back in US

**Vietnam leg of Special International Study Jan 14-18, 2024**

Date	Content
<b>Jan 14</b>	University Tennessee arrival Tan Son Nhat Airport
<b>Jan 15</b>	
9:00-10:00	USDA briefing on Agriculture Trade Opportunity in Vietnam
10:15	Depart for Port visit
11:00-12:00	Port visit
12:15-13:30	Lunch
14:00-15:00	Cotton Council
15:15	Depart for a spinning facility that exports
16:00-17:00	Spinning facility visit
17:15	Return Hotel & Rest
<b>Jan 16</b>	
8:00-9:30	HAWA
9:45	Depart for Ho Nai Furniture (a wood products (e.g., furniture) manufacturers and exporters in Dong Nai Province)
11:00-12:00	Ho Nai Furniture visit
12:15-13:30	Lunch
14:00-15:00	Another Wood Importer visit
15:15	Return Hotel & Rest
<b>Jan 17</b>	<b>Mekong Delta Tour</b>
8:00-9:00	Meeting a Seafood Importer
9:15	Depart for Mekong Delta
10:45-12:00	Fish Farm visit in Tien Giang
12:15-13:30	Lunch
14:00-15:00	Cold Chain visit
16:00-17:00	Vietnam Logistic Institute
17:15	Return Hotel & Rest
<b>Jan 18</b>	<b>Depart US</b>

### 3. Academic Training and Cohort Courses

In addition to the core courses for graduate students (fall 2023), and cohort course ALEC 585 *Global Sustainable Development Goals*. In fall 2024, the NNF students also took AREC 593: *Special Topics in Agricultural Economics: Applied Trade Analysis*. The course is designed for students interested in careers requiring a proficient understanding of agricultural trade and related policies, and the ability to conduct applied analysis of global trade and policy issues. Additionally, students interested in careers with the USDA or other federal agencies that work on global trade issues greatly benefited from this course. The objective of the course was to provide an understanding of contemporary U.S. trade policies and the relationships between public policy and economics in the context of a globalized world economy. This course equipped students with a conceptual understanding of the causes and consequences of international trade, advance their analytical skills for applied international economic research and policy analysis, and develop professional capabilities in evaluating policies and trends through presentations and written projects.

Each student has completed the necessary coursework for the NNF program, and the core coursework for their perspective M.S. programs (ALEC and AREC). All students have been admitted to candidacy and are expected to defend their thesis research this spring and graduate May 2025.

### 4. Thesis and International Research

The Fellows all have thesis advisors and committees, and thesis topics have been selected and approved. Thesis proposals were successfully defended in late summer 2024. All thesis projects will focus on a global issue, including international trade, natural resource management, or development/extension in a foreign-country context. Fellows are scheduled to defend their thesis research this spring 2025 (late March or early April).

Below are the thesis topics and summaries for each Fellow.

Kortni Blalock (AREC)

**Title:** How the Russia-Ukraine Conflict is Shaping U.S. Wood Pellet Exports and EU Imports

**Summary:** The EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED) classifies wood pellets as carbon neutral, enabling the United States – the world's largest wood pellet exporter – to supply 25 percent of the EU's market. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, this study assesses how these trade sanctions have impacted U.S. and global wood pellet exports to the EU, uses a first-differenced form of the Almost Ideal Demand System (AIDS) to estimate EU demand for imported wood pellets by source, and analyzes the implied tariff or subsidy between actual trade with sanctions and estimated trade without sanctions.

Michelle Boutell (ALEC)

**Title:** The Gendered Dimensions of Climate Adaptation Among Small Scale Farmers in Negros Occidental, Philippines.

**Summary:** Using a mixed-methods approach, the study examines how men and women perceive the impacts of climate change on agriculture and the adaptation strategies they adopt in the context of their gendered roles and responsibilities.

Caroline Brooks (ALEC)

**Title:** The Impact of Virtual Reality (VR) Professional Development on Agricultural Teachers' Intent to Use VR for Teaching International Agriculture Topics

**Summary:** Research explores school-based agriculture education teachers' perceptions and intent to incorporate VR to teach international agriculture topics in their classrooms.

Natalie Crisci (AREC)

**Title:** Impact of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism on Fertilizer Imports

**Summary:** The objective of this study is to analyze the potential impact of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on the demand for imported synthetic fertilizers and compare the cost to EU consumers to the carbon emission reducing environmental benefit of this policy, for the purpose of providing a cost-benefit analysis of the CBAM policy to all relevant stakeholders.

Hannah Donahue (AREC)

**Title:** Adapting to Water Scarcity Through Collective Decisions: Evidence from Irrigation Organizations in the West

**Summary:** This study contributes an econometric analysis of factors which motivate irrigation organizations in the Western US to invest in adaptations to climate change-induced water scarcity. This study is the first published quantitative analysis using the 2019 USDA Survey of Irrigation Organizations data, the first data collection of its kind since 1978.

Ana Maria Greenberger (ALEC)

**Title:** Exploring Indigenous Perspectives in Agri-Food Systems and their Contribution to Climate Change Adaptation Strategies in Guatemala

**Summary:** The purpose of this study is to investigate how indigenous perspectives influence and contribute to climate adaptation strategies and how these communities manage challenges within the agri-food systems of Guatemala.

Makenzie Smith (ALEC)

**Title:** Understanding the Need for Migrant Labor and the Challenges Faced by Migrant Labor Contractors within Southeastern Agricultural Operations

**Summary:** This research explores the H-2A Visa Program, investigates the growing need for migrant labor among southeastern agricultural operations, and looks to explore challenges faced by migrant labor contractors.

## 5. Professional Development and Leadership

Fellows participated in the James L. Herbert Executive Seminar Series (fall 2024). The Executive Seminar Series at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) is a unique and enriching course designed to connect students with top leaders in the agricultural industry. This seminar series, named after James L. Herbert, a generous donor and alumnus,



brings C-suite executives and industry leaders into the classroom to share their experiences, insights, and perspectives on various agricultural issues and policies.

The course is offered by the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and is co-taught by associate professors Chris Boyer and Karen DeLong. Students can engage directly with speakers, ask questions, and gain valuable knowledge that cannot be found in textbooks. Topics discussed in the seminar series are driven by real-world matters, including the challenges and opportunities of feeding the world, the impact of technology on agriculture, and the future of the food industry.

The fellows were required to attend a minimum of 5 seminars and write a paper at the end of the semester documenting what they learned. Kortni Blalock, Caroline Brooks, Natalie Crisci, Hannah Donahue, Michelle Boutell, and Makenzie Smith. Lindsey Hickok-Perry will complete this requirement in fall 2025. Ana Maria Greenberger is pursuing other leadership training opportunities.

See the next page for the seminar overview and list of speakers.

## **6. Mentorship and pipelining (Participation in Academic Conferences and Professional Exchanges)**

The fellows are scheduled to present (or have presented) preliminary research at academic conferences. Two fellows will be presenting research at the Southern Agricultural Economics Association annual meeting (February 2025, Irvine, TX). Another fellow presented at the American Water Resources Association, the Universities Council on Water Resources, and the National Institutes for Water Resources Joint Conference (October 2024, St. Louis, MO). Three fellows will be attending and presenting at an international conference: Association for International Agriculture and Extension Education (AIAEE) Conference (April 2025, Inverness, Scotland). In addition to the AIAEE Conference, a fellow also presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on School-plus-Home Gardens cum Biodiversity Enhancement and Enterprise (SHGBEE3), November 2024 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Kortni Blalock, Caroline Brooks, Natalie Crisci, Hannah Donahue, Michelle Boutell, and Makenzie Smith also presented research posters at the 2024 University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) International Showcase (September 2024).



**AREC 395: James L. Herbert Executive Seminar Series**  
**MWF 11:30AM-12:20PM**  
**Agricultural and Natural Resources Building 123**

Date	Speaker	Home football /notes
Friday, August 23	<b>Christina Slater</b> , TN Dept. of Ag, BS & MS UTK AREC. <b>Jonathan Trew</b> , United Producers, BS UTK AREC.	<b>Recent alumni panel</b>
Friday, August 30	<b>Emily Buck</b> , Director of Communications & Marketing, TN Wildlife Resources Agency, BS UTK Animal Science, MS Purdue.	Chattanooga
<b>Wed., Sept. 4</b>	<b>Dr. Keith Carver</b> . Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture. MS & PhD UTK.	Calhoun's for lunch after
<b>Wed., Sept. 11</b>	<b>Andrew Foust</b> - McCormick's President-Americas, BS UTK Communications. MBA Loyola University.	<b>On ZOOM</b>
Friday, Sept. 13	<b>Jason Alexander</b> -Farm Credit Mid-America, Senior Vice President of Agricultural Lending in Tennessee.	Kent State. Ag Day
Friday, Sept. 20	<b>Kent Kilpatrick</b> - Family owns the Apple Barn in Sevierville, TN. BS UTK AREC.	Fieldtrip to the Apple Barn
<b>Wed., Oct. 2</b>	<b>Matthew Tedford</b> , Global Sales Director, Tedford/Tellico, Inc.	
Friday, Oct.11	<b>Melissa Herbert</b> -Former Vice President of Neogen, Government and Industry Affairs. Jim and Judi Herbert's daughter.	Florida
Friday, Oct. 18	<b>Jody Emerson</b> - Vice President of Agriculture, Pictsweet Farms. BS UTK Agriculture.	Alabama
Friday, Nov. 1	<b>Jim Lambert</b> . Director of Business Development and Strategy for Yakima Chief Hops. BS UTK AREC.	Kentucky
Friday, Nov. 8	<b>Donnie Smith</b> . Former CEO Tyson Foods and Foster Farms. UTK Board of Trustees and namesake of the UTK Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture. BS UTK Animal Science.	Mississippi State
<b>Wed., Nov. 13</b>	<b>Randy Boyd</b> , University of Tennessee President. BS UTK Haslam College of Business. MS Liberal Studies (foreign policy). University of Oklahoma	
Friday, Nov. 15	<b>Joe and Jessi Baker</b> - Founders Ole Smoky Moonshine and YeeHaw. JD UTK Law.	Fieldtrip to YeeHaw, Knoxville

## **7. DEI Training**

Fellows will participate in DEI training and gain cross-cultural skills through SIS, international research, and foreign language coursework. Many of these activities will be through the University's DEI program. Students will be expected to write a summary paper of all DEI training and related activities.

## **Budget and Expenses**

As of December 31, 2024. Total expenses have included Fellowship payments to 6 students.