Department of Agricultural & Consumer Economics, College of ACES, UIUC
USAID Soybean Innovation Lab 2014-2015 Undergraduate Research Interns in Development

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Soybean Value Chain Research (Soybean Innovation Lab, SIL) is pleased to announce a new undergraduate research internship program at the University of Illinois. The goal of the internship program is to integrate the undergraduate experience with important development issues such as poverty reduction, agricultural development and food security as well as the research methods used in these analyses. Two outstanding undergraduate students have been selected as the SIL research interns for 2014-2015, providing support to the lab in its goal of improving the soybean value chain in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ryan Highfill is a senior in the Department of Economics at UIUC with a specialization in Latin American Economics, Economic Development and Crop Growth and Management. Ryan speaks Portuguese and is interested in evaluating the soybean value chain in Mozambique, one of SIL’s project countries. Ryan has excellent international experience through volunteer work in Costa Rica and in the U.S. working with international community members. Ryan also serves as a Resident Advisor on campus and has extensive background in community farming and gardens.

Kenda Davis is a junior in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at UIUC with a focus on Public Policy and Law and Leadership Studies. Kenda is interested in strengthening intellectual property rights to enable private sector soybean seed research and development in sub-Saharan Africa. Kenda has worked as a representative for Illinois Student Admissions, providing campus tours and group visits to prospective students. Kenda has tremendous experience in public outreach, fundraising and quality control.

The two SIL undergraduate research interns will be afforded an opportunity to travel to a SIL project country in Africa to conduct research on an aspect of soybean economics in Summer 2015. Both students will receive independent study credit for their efforts and will be required to submit a research paper upon conclusion of their internship.

We encourage you to meet with Ryan and Kenda if your schedules allow to help us in providing the interns with a robust understanding of the current programs, strengths and opportunities taking place in the developing world by the College of ACES at the University of Illinois. We also encourage partners in the community engaged in this important work to reach out to SIL. For more information on the internship please contact the SIL Program Manager Courtney Tamimie (tamimi@illinois.edu, 217-333-7425) or feel free to contact the interns directly: Ryan Highfill (highfill2@illinois.edu) Kenda Davis (ksdavis3@illinois.edu). The interns will be working in Rooms 414-416 in Mumford Hall through Spring Semester 2015.

Web: www.soybeaninnovationlab.illinois.edu  Twitter: @tropicalsoylab