Recruitment of 1890 Graduate Students into Agriculture

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The shortage of multicultural students in agriculture is very crucial. In 1920, there were 926,000 Black-operated farms but has since then decreased to 41,024 in 2007. But in 2012, the number of black-operated farms has increased from 41,024 in 2007 to 44,629 in 2012. Though the increase of black-operated farms has progressed in recent years, black farmers still only make up 1.4% of the 3.2 million farmers in America (Census of Agriculture, 2012). And though the number of African American students pursuing higher education in agriculture has increased in recent years, it is still incomparable to the other departments within their institutions. “Diversity in the workplace should resemble diversity in the United States; however, in agricultural fields, minorities represent less than 5% of the workforce” (Westbrook, Alston, 2007) Most Blacks receive undergraduate degrees in agriculture from 1890 land grant institutions in the South. Further, several of these institutions do not offer graduate degrees in agriculture; most that do have limited degree offerings and low enrollments.

The proposed program enables rising juniors and seniors in agriculture at 1890 institutions to participate in the KSRE summer research program. These students and their KSRE faculty advisors will conduct follow-up research presentation at the end of the summer program. Mentoring relationships will be initiated so other 1890 students will become enthusiastic about graduate study at Kansas State University College of Agriculture. The multicultural KSRE fellowship program started in 2006.