CAFNR Student Research Scholars Showcase: Celebrating Excellence in Discovery and Innovation

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The College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (CAFNR) Student Research Scholars Showcase celebrates the outstanding accomplishments of undergraduate and graduate student researchers whose work addresses critical challenges in agriculture, food systems, natural resources, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Through faculty-mentored research experiences, students are developing innovative, science-based solutions with tangible benefits for producers, consumers, and communities.

A distinguishing feature of this year's showcase was the students' ability to move beyond traditional poster presentations by incorporating interactive demonstrations, prototypes, research products, and hands-on exhibits. These displays highlighted the practical applicability of their research and allowed visitors to observe directly how student-developed solutions can improve agricultural productivity, food security, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. The exhibits clearly demonstrated the significance, relevance, and real-world impact of student research across food, agriculture, and natural resource systems.

Projects represented diverse disciplines, including plant and animal sciences, food and nutrition, natural resources and environmental management, biotechnology, digital agriculture, and emerging agricultural technologies. Through oral presentations, posters, and demonstration tables, students showcased not only their scientific findings but also their ability to translate research into meaningful outcomes that address local, regional, and global challenges.

The showcase provided an opportunity for Prairie View A&M University's Executive Leadership Team, including President Tomikia P. LeGrande, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Aashir Nasim, and Vice President for Research and Innovation Magesh Rajan, to engage with student researchers and share how their own undergraduate research experiences shaped their professional journeys. Their remarks reinforced the transformative role of research in developing future scholars, innovators, and leaders.

President LeGrande encouraged student research scholars to use research as a platform to explore their interests and discover their career paths. She shared how her own experiences helped her recognize her aspiration to become a university president. Dr. Nasim reflected on his journey from engaging in laboratory-based research to developing a greater interest in helping students through academic preparation, which ultimately led him to his current role. Dr. Rajan discussed his undergraduate research journey and how it inspired his continued interest in research, leading to his current position as vice president for research and innovation.

Two CAFNR master's students, Srijana Chaudray (Natural Resources and Environmental Systems) and Andrew Darkwad (Food and Nutrition), delivered lightning talks highlighting their research activities and the broader impacts of their work.

Collectively, the student projects demonstrated how experiential learning, discovery, and innovation contribute to solving real-world problems while strengthening CAFNR Research's 3+1 Strategy through excellence in research, teaching, Extension, and stakeholder engagement. The showcase highlighted the college's commitment to building a highly skilled workforce, advancing impactful scholarship, and translating scientific discoveries into practical solutions that benefit communities throughout Texas and beyond.

More than a celebration of scholarly achievement, the CAFNR Student Research Scholars Showcase reflects the college's dedication to preparing the next generation of scientists, innovators, and decision-makers who will lead advances in food, agriculture, natural resources, and environmental sustainability.

Join us in recognizing the accomplishments of our Student Research Scholars and celebrating the transformative power of research, innovation, and community engagement in shaping a more sustainable and prosperous future.