



Alliance for Graduate Education & the Professoriate
affiliate of the Michigan AGEP Alliance

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MSU AGEP's third annual trip to NSF

East Lansing, Michigan, March 4, 2015- In February, the Graduate School invited a group of advanced doctoral students and post-docs of the MSU AGEP (Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate) Learning Community to tour the National Science Foundation (NSF). The tour was organized by Dr. Valerie Wilson, Division Director for the Division of Graduate Education. The AGEP group met with program directors and other NSF staff members to get advice on career planning, grant-writing and to learn about the workings and mission of the agency.



AGEP Students and Graduate School Staff at the National Science Foundation

Welcoming remarks were provided by Dr. Wilson and afterwards, the graduate students and post-docs heard from Mr. Neil Canfield who discussed science advocacy. Next, the MSU group met with Drs. Rich Boone (DGE), Joerg Schlatterer (GRFP Program), and Claire Hemingway (NRT Program) to review the variety of doctoral support grants and post-doctoral fellowships at the agency. The morning ended with breakout sessions in which subgroups of the MSU visitors met individually with Directorate Representatives, Amy Chan Hilton and Daphen Jean (Engineering), Alan Wilson and Steve Klien (Biological Science), and Jeffrey Mantz (Social and Behavioral Sciences).

Following the subgroup discussions, AGEP participants reconvened as a single group, and met over lunch with several AAAS and Presidential Management Fellows to demystify the application process for those prestigious programs. The working lunch was capped by presentations by Jeffrey Cunningham and Brandon Jones that covered the employment application process for positions at NSF and other governmental agencies. The visit concluded with a debriefing discussion with NSF Representatives, Rich Boone and Claire Hemingway.

The MSU visitors saw immediate and future value for what they learned from their NSF hosts, "The program directors opened my eyes to several opportunities for PhD's that I was not aware of," said Phillip Brooks, graduate student in the Comparative Medicine and Integrative Biology program. "I learned the program officers and other staff members are more accessible than I could ever imagine," commented Fredy Rodriguez, graduate student in the Anthropology program. He added, "I learned about two amazing fellowships I had not seriously considered before. And the most valuable thing for me was to learn what it is that NSF values in a research proposal." The trip was a sponsored initiative of the MSU Center for Academic and Future Faculty Excellence (CAFFE) and organized by Associate Deans of The Graduate School Drs. Antonio Nunez (Psychology & Neuroscience), and Julius Jackson (Microbiology & Molecular Genetics), with the support of Steven Thomas, Program Manager.

For more information about the MSU AGEP Community, contact Steven Thomas (deshawn@grd.msu.edu) at 517-432-3268
