



i-ACES Vol. 1 No. 1 (2014)

i-ACES

{*inquiry-ACES: Highlights of Undergraduate Research in ACES*}

Dear *i-ACES* Readers:

I am very proud to present this inaugural issue of *Inquiry in ACES (i-ACES)*, the undergraduate online research journal sponsored by the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) at the University of Illinois. This special issue features the scholarship of some of the most talented high school students across the state of Illinois and the nation who participated in the College of ACES Research Apprentice Program II (RAP II) during the summer of 2014.

The Research Apprentice Program opens the eyes of talented youth to the vast and exciting career options offered through the food, agricultural, human and environmental sciences. One key objective is to increase the participation of students from ethnic minority and underrepresented groups in S.T.E.M. majors, especially those that pertain to food, agricultural, human and environmental systems. We do this by providing personalized experiences that combine classroom learning with real-world scientific problem-solving and discovery.

We believe that understanding the world of science, and learning how to best prepare for scientific careers, are key to engaging youth and inspiring them to advance the research and educational capacity of our nation. Thus, each RAP II Scholar had the opportunity to work closely with a mentor— a faculty member or experienced researcher— during a 7-week residential summer research program. In addition to working on their individual research projects, RAP II Scholars also participated in a variety of enrichment activities including research seminars, laboratory exercises, field trips, and workshops that built scientific investigative and writing skills.

We are proud that this special issue of *i-ACES* gives voice to the work our RAP Scholars conducted in more than a dozen laboratories at the University of Illinois. As you progress through this research showcase, we hope that you will agree that the potential of our RAP Scholars is without limits.

Sincerely,

Jesse Thompson
Assistant Dean and Coordinator, Diversity Programs
Director, College of ACES Pre-College S.T.E.M. Programs
University of Illinois