

Kara J. (Riggs) Casy, Ph.D.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Articulate agronomy instructor with proven ability to effectively lead collaborative, customer-based services with multiple stakeholders. Innovative, systems-thinking, and high performing professional who manages complex data-driven grant-funded programs to support grassroots organizations.

Core competencies include:

- Domestic Agricultural Development
- Sustainable & Regenerative Agriculture
- Urban Agriculture
- Global Food Security
- Crop Physiology
- Team Building, Leadership & Motivation

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 10 years' experience in grant-funded programs in large-scale universities with proven success
- After first two years as the founding director, Agriculture became the fastest growing academic discipline at Dallas College: **670% enrollment increase** from Fall 2018 to Fall 2020
- Initiated MOU and developed new collaborative processes to create the **Texas A&M University-Commerce Agriculture Academy** with Dallas College.

RECENT EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

May 2022-Present

Lecturer of Agronomy

- Overseeing the Student Learning Outcomes assessment and reporting for MS and PhD Agroecology graduate students
- Serving as the primary contact and as an academic advisor for all successful applicants in the online, non-thesis M.S. program and the online graduate certificate programs
- Teaching a core course within the undergraduate Plant Science degree, Principles of Plant Science, PLS 3004C
- Developing and delivering a new UF Quest 2 General Education course
- Teaching a popular required course for multiple undergraduate majors, Genetics, AGR 3303
- Assisting in the development and delivery of a new genetics course for UF Online
- Serving as faculty advisor for the Agronomy Soils Club.

DALLAS COLLEGE

April 2018-July 2021

Director of Urban Agriculture and Renewable Resources

- Developed a strategic vision for the new Agriculture program at Dallas College
 - Operated with an authentic commitment to bringing an anti-racist, intersectional, and participatory approach to urban agriculture education and increasing the agency of communities to tell their food system stories
 - Served as a knowledgeable and passionate public speaker for the program
 - Led efforts to ensure that the Agriculture program was a visible and credible partner within the regenerative agriculture and sustainable food systems movements
 - Assessed current staffing (ie: adjunct instructors) and consultant (ie: curriculum writing) needs and augmented if necessary
 - Managed engagements with consultants and vendors for the Agriculture program

- Stewarded and cultivated the strategic relationships within Dallas College to deepen their engagement and worked collaboratively to oversee the strategic direction of the program
 - Engaged community stakeholders through affinity groups, events, updates and communications, and other stewardship activities
 - Forged and deepened relationships with a wide range of partners and stakeholders (ie: food systems, social change, academic administration, and government)
 - Planned and facilitated regular meetings, recruited stakeholders for a new Agriculture Academy with Texas A&M University-Commerce
- Worked in partnership with the Sustainability Committee at Dallas College in funder prospecting, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship
 - Served as “chief development writer,” managing all letters of inquiry, proposals, and renewals for funding for the Agriculture program
 - Assured that each funding source received reports on program results and finances in accordance with reporting requirements with Dallas College’s grant manager
 - Oversaw the financial management of the Agriculture program’s expenses, setting financial priorities to manage grant funds allocated to the new Agriculture program.

DALLAS COLLEGE

August 2018-June 2021

Adjunct Faculty Instructor of Agriculture

- Instructed courses in Agronomy, Horticulture, and Introduction to the Agricultural Industry
- Performed teaching responsibilities, created syllabi, developed curricula, administered all grades
- Ensured standard compliance with academic policies and procedures, federal, state and local rules, assessment and evaluation regulations, in accordance with accreditation requirements
- Maintained confidentiality of student records with high ethical standards
- Monitored agriculture student enrollment and developed new innovations, techniques and avenues of agriculture instruction to enhance existing teaching procedures
- Worked collaboratively with colleagues in a team environment
- Supervised, recruited, and mentored student honors projects in agricultural specialty areas.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – COLUMBIA

January-December 2017

College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources International Programs (CIP)

Communications Coordinator, Sr.

- Coordinated the submission of seven grant proposals and budgets to the USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), featuring training events with representatives of farmers’ associations
- Prepared two reports regarding grant performance and deliverables to submit to funding agencies
- Worked closely with team leaders, faculty committees and chairs to prepare project plans for CIP
- Managed the CIP university webpage and Facebook page, providing effective customer service
- Supervised CAFNR student activities at the World Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa
- Lead the CAFNR World Food Prize Luncheon, featuring World Food Prize Laureates, all USDA Borlaug Fellows, the CAFNR Dean, and top agricultural industry and research leaders
- Coordinated CIP Committee meetings and disseminated relevant information to the committee
- Provided strategic planning support for annual goals to make the programs office self-sufficient
- Assisted with the planning and implementing of internal procedures to meet the requirements of grants and funding agencies, and coordinated, tracked, and analyzed grant deliverables.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – COLUMBIA

August-November 2015

College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources International Programs (CIP)

USDA-FAS and USAID World Food Prize Side Events and Borlaug Dialogue

Student Ambassador

- Provided technical assistance for the USDA-FAS and the USAID McGovern–Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program side events at the Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, IA.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI – COLUMBIA August-November 2014
 College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources International Programs (CIP)
 USDA-FAS World Food Prize Side Events and Borlaug Dialogue

Student Ambassador

- Provided technical assistance for the USDA-FAS side events at the Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - COLUMBIA August 2010-December 2016

Molecular Life Sciences Fellow & Graduate Research Scientist

Dissertation Advisor: Robert E. Sharp, Ph.D.

- Optimized an experimental system that led to the successful submission of a \$4 million NSF genome grant proposal, “Physiological Genomics of Maize Nodal Root Growth under Drought”
- Collected and analyzed data, and prepared monthly presentations to report the data analysis
- Followed-up with individuals to ensure that project objectives and timelines were met
- Utilized oral and written communication skills to interact with varying levels of staff, faculty, students, the general public, and individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Coordinated the development and writing of three National Science Foundation grant proposals.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY June-September 2008 and June-September 2009

Student Research Internship in Plant Pathology (SRIPP)

Honors Thesis Advisor: Terrence L. Graham, Ph.D.

- Transformed soybean using *Agrobacterium rhizogenes* and RNAi to grow transgenic hairy roots and carried out root/zoospore assays to measure chemoattraction of *Phytophthora sojae* zoospores
- Collected and analyzed data in Excel and reported progress through PowerPoint presentations
- Developed and submitted a successful grant proposal to fund this honors thesis research through the highly competitive Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) Competitive Grants Program.

DONALD DANFORTH PLANT SCIENCE CENTER, ST. LOUIS, MO June-September 2007

Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), National Science Foundation

Advisor: Oliver Yu, Ph.D.

- Transformed *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and DH5 Alpha *Escherichia coli* using heat shock methods to optimize production of a potential pharmaceutical, resveratrol
- Cut and ligated plasmids for the cloning of a gene using a Gateway vector
- Developed a new project to improve plant disease resistance and gained approval to complete the project in addition to the initial optimization assignment.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Ph.D. Plant, Insect, and Microbial Sciences, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO **2010-2016**

Dissertation Title: *Maize Nodal Root Growth Under Water Deficits*

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH **2006-2010**

Honors Thesis: *Chemotaxis of P. sojae Zoospores to Soybean Roots is Altered by Isoflavone Silencing*

University of São Paulo, Escola Superior de Agricultura Luiz de Queiroz (ESALQ) **2008**

Studied abroad for six weeks with Alpha Zeta Partners, surveying agricultural customs, cooperatives, farms, ranches, nurseries, and food processing plants throughout Brazil.

PUBLICATIONS

Casy, KJ. 2018. Bending the Track. *Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development*.

Riggs, KJ. 2016. Maize Nodal Root Growth Under Water Deficit in a Divided-Chamber System. *University of Missouri Doctoral Dissertation*.

Cafer AM, **Riggs KJ**, Mubichi FM, Sandler LN. 2014. A Socio-Cultural Perspective on Agricultural Development within a Sub-Saharan African Context: Paradigm Shifts and Interdisciplinary Engagement. *Agrarian Frontiers*. 2(1): 35-47.

Riggs, KJ. 2010. Chemotaxis of *Phytophthora sojae* Zoospores to Soybean Roots is Altered by Isoflavone Silencing. *The Ohio State University Honors Thesis*.

TOTAL RESEARCH GRANTS AND GIFTS: \$146,650.00

- 2020 Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program, USDA-NIFA. “North Texas Farm Success: A Series for Beginning Farmers” (Co-PI: Managing \$10,500 of \$62,500 total award)
- 2020 Travel Award, STEM Division of El Centro, National Council of Science and the Environment (\$1,500)
- 2019 Travel Award, STEM Division of El Centro, National Council of Science and the Environment (\$800)
- 2014 Mizzou Advantage Travel Grant, University of Missouri (\$1200)
- 2013 Scholarship to attend the World Food Prize and Borlaug Dialogue, MU (\$1000)
- 2012 Graduate Professional Council Travel Award, University of Missouri (\$400)
- 2012 Graduate Student Travel Grant, Division of Plant Sciences, University of Missouri (\$1000)
- 2012 Douglas D. Randall Young Scientists Development Fund Travel Award, MU (\$500)
- 2011 Life Sciences Fellowship First Year Travel Grant, University of Missouri (\$700)
- 2011 Graduate Student Travel Grant, Division of Plant Sciences, University of Missouri (\$750)
- 2010 Christopher S. Bond Molecular Life Sciences Doctoral Fellowship, MU (\$25,000 renewed for four years)
- 2010 Division of Plant Sciences Doctoral Fellowship, University of Missouri (\$25,000)
- 2009 Ohio Ag. Research and Development Center Competitive Grants Program (\$3,300)

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- Assoc. for International Agriculture and Rural Development, Young Professional Award (2018)
- Future Leaders Forum Fellow, Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (2015)
- Rollins Society Induction, University of Missouri: Recognizes graduate students who significantly advanced the well-being of self-defined communities beyond their academic work
- Featured Student of the University of Missouri, MIZZOU Alumni Magazine (2015)
- Research and Creative Activities Forum, MU: Biological Sciences, First Place Award (2014)
- Research and Creative Activities Forum, MU: Biological Sciences, Second Place (2013)
- Ohio Agricultural Science and Bioproducts Research Scholarship 2009, Ohio Soybean Council
- 2009 Academic Enrichment Grant, Undergraduate Student Government, Ohio State University
- A.J. Hoffman Award Scholarship, The Ohio State University (2008-2010)
- Plant Protection Scholarship, The Ohio State University (2006-2010)
- Trustee’s Scholarship, The Ohio State University (2006-2010)

- Featured Student, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (2007-2008)
- Ohio Agricultural Science and Bioproducts Research Scholarship 2008, Ohio Soybean Council
- Denman Undergraduate Research Forum: First Place Award, Division of Agriculture (2007)
- College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Research Forum: First Place (2007)
- Glencoe/McGraw-Hill: Young Scientist Award (2006)
- Columbus Technical Council's Outstanding Science Senior of the Year, Second Place (2006)
- Ohio Junior Sciences and Humanities Symposium: First Alternate, National Symposium (2006)
- The Ohio State University: Department of Plant Pathology State Science Day Scholarship (2006)
- District Governor's Award: Excellence in Information Science and Technology research (2005)
- The Ohio State University: Department of Plant Pathology State Science Day Scholarship (2005)
- District Governor's Award: Excellence in Biotechnology (2004)
- District Governor's Award: Excellence in Environmental Sciences Research (2004)
- Roxanne Laboratories: Outstanding Science Project in Biochemistry (2004)
- The Ohio State University: Department of Plant Pathology State Science Day Scholarship (2004)
- Ohio Soybean Council: District Science Day Award (2002)
- Ohio Soybean Council: State Science Day Award (2002)

PRESENTATIONS

- 3/22 UT Arlington:** *Introduction to Sustainability, Food and Agriculture.* (Lecture) Arlington, TX.
- 9/21 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Welcome Back to the Garden.* (Talk) Dallas, TX.
- 4/21 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Starting a Community Garden in Dallas.* (Presentation with Ples Montgomery IV, Mike Luster) Dallas, TX.
- 3/21 Dallas College:** *All About the Agriculture Academy.* (With Dr. Bob Williams) Dallas, TX.
- 3/21 GROW North Texas:** *Seed Starting.* (Talk) Dallas, TX.
- 3/21 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Food Justice: Where and When I Enter.* (Moderator) Dallas, TX.
- 2/21 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Planning and Planting Your Spring Vegetable Garden.* (Presentation with Darciea Houston) Dallas, TX.
- 1/21 Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions:** *Container Gardens, Raised Beds, and Soil Amendments.* (Presentation with Darciea Houston and Hyiat El-Jundi) Dallas, TX.
- 12/20 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Regenerating Garden Soil.* (With Hyiat El-Jundi) Dallas, TX.
- 12/20 Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society:** *Growing a Healthier ZIP Code.* (Panelist) Dallas, TX.
- 12/20 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Beginners Beekeeping.* (With Shafiq Small) Dallas, TX.
- 11/20 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Growing Food and Skills with Kids.* (Presentation with Alendra Lyons) Dallas, TX.
- 10/20 Sustainable Dallas College:** *Grow Your Own Greens Inside Your Home – How to Get Started in Hydroponic Production for Beginners.* (Presentation with Ples Montgomery, IV) Dallas, TX.

- 9/20 **Southern Methodist University:** *Public Policy and Sustainable Food Systems.* (Invited Guest Lecture) Dallas, TX.
- 9/20 **Sustainable Dallas College:** *Natural Pest Management: From Squirrels to Squash Vine Borers.* (Presentation with Darciea Houston) Dallas, TX.
- 7/20 **Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas (ATAT):** *Low-Budget Classroom Activities Paired with TEKS.* (Presentation with Dr. Kelly Black) Dallas, TX.
- 7/20 **Slow Food Lunch Break:** *Bridging the Gap Between Urban Ag and Higher Education.* (Panelist) Dallas, TX.
- 7/20 **Sustainable Dallas College:** *Oh the Veggies You'll Grow! What To Plant Now in Dallas.* (Presentation with Darciea Houston) Dallas, TX.
- 6/20 **STEMCEL:** *Connect. Engage. Learn.* (Panelist) Dallas, TX.
- 6/20 **Dallas Public Library and Green Dallas:** *Grow With Us: Make Your Own Gardening Containers.* (Talk) Dallas, TX.
- 4/20 **Sustainable Dallas College:** *Foodscaping: Grow Your Own Food in Your Front Yard.* (Talk) Dallas, TX.
- 3/20 **Dallas City Council, Environment and Sustainability Committee:** *Local Sustainably Grown Food in North Texas.* (Public Briefing) Dallas, TX.
- 1/20 **National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE):** *Educating Future Decision-Makers: Sustainability as a Pathway K-12 to University.* (Panelist) Washington, DC.
- 1/20 **National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE):** *The 2020 Community College Handbook: Decision-Making.* (Panelist) Washington, DC.
- 11/19 **EarthX SustainableU:** *Urban Agriculture and Food Security: Connect with the Experts.* (Moderator and Host)
- 11/18 **Latinos in Agriculture Leaders Conference:** *Opportunities to Study Agriculture in Dallas.* (Panelist) Dallas, TX.
- 2/16 **Universities Fighting World Hunger (UFWH) Summit:** *Applied Research and Interdisciplinary Engagement in Hunger Mitigation.* (Panel Moderator, Host) Columbia, MO.
- 2/16 **Universities Fighting World Hunger (UFWH) Summit:** *Root resilience: A hidden opportunity for water and food security.* (Poster) Columbia, MO.
- 6/15 **Association for International Agriculture and Rural Development (AIARD) Future Leaders Forum:** *Root resilience: A hidden opportunity for water and food security.* (Poster) Washington, DC.

- 5/15 **University of Missouri Interdisciplinary Plant Group (IPG) Symposium:** *Maize nodal root growth response to water deficits: characterization in a divided-chamber model system.* (Poster) Columbia, MO.
- 3/15 **Mizzou SASHAcon (Skeptics, Atheist, Secular, Humanist, and Agnostics):** *Anti-Science: A Bipartisan Issue.* (Talk) Columbia, MO.
- 3/15 **American Society for Plant Biologists (ASPB) Midwestern Sectional Meeting:** *Maize nodal root growth response to water deficits: characterization in a divided-chamber model system.* (Talk) St. Louis, MO.
- 11/14 **Donald Danforth Plant Science Center and University of Missouri Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Public Signing** (Guest speaker) St. Louis, MO.
- 10/14 **University of Missouri Plant Sciences and Bioengineering Colloquium:** *A new model system for maize nodal root studies.* (Talk) Columbia, MO.
- 4/14 **University of Missouri:** *Genes and the Environment.* (Panelist) Columbia, MO.
- 5/13 **Donald Danforth Plant Science Center:** *Conversations.* (Plant Science Research Demonstration) St. Louis, MO.
- 6/12 **International Society of Root Research (ISRR) 8th Symposium:** *Maize nodal root growth response to water deficits: characterization in a divided-chamber model system.* (Poster) Dundee, UK.
- 7/08 **The American Phytopathological Society (APS) Annual Meeting:** *Chemotaxis of Phytophthora Zoospores to Soybean Roots is Altered by RNAi Silencing of Isoflavone Biosynthesis.* (Poster) Minneapolis, MN.
- 5/07 **The Ohio State University (OSU) Denman Undergraduate Research Forum:** *Silencing the Signal: Isoflavones and Phytophthora Sojae Zoospore Chemotaxis.* (Poster) Columbus, OH.
- 4/07 **The Ohio State University (OSU) College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) Undergraduate Research Forum:** *Silencing the Signal: Isoflavones and Phytophthora Sojae Zoospore Chemotaxis.* (Poster) Columbus, OH.