

News from Savannah River National Laboratory

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Inspiring the Next Generation in Innovation

AIKEN, S.C. (April 29, 2014) – “Our partnerships with colleges and universities are critical for our growth and the future of the Savannah River National Laboratory. We learn from one another. We ask questions and we ask about what we see. That’s how we get better.” That is the challenge given by Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) Director Dr. Terry Michalske to students participating in the 2014 Research Collaboration Workshop and Poster Session for Historically Black Colleges and Universities hosted by the Department of Energy (DOE) and SRNL.

The program is designed to provide resources and promote opportunities for minority students in technology fields of research that are critical to DOE. Approximately 150 students and school representatives attended the workshop to present their research and to learn about the research of others. These students represented nine colleges and universities from across South Carolina with research ranging from the evaluation of pine cones and egg shells to remove heavy metals from the environment, to the molecular modeling of graphene oxide.

“We are building a laboratory for the future. Our young people are a big part of what we have planned. Our students of today will



Benedict College student Faith Kibuye (top) explains her research to SRNL Laboratory Director Dr. Terry Michalske.

DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary Mark Gilbertson (bottom) learns of research performed by South Carolina State student Andrew McCray



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stimulate current research and solve the problems our nation faces in creating a cleaner environment, ensuring our national security, and creating clean energy,” said Michalske. “Partnerships and collaborative efforts such as this allow for an exchange of ideas and builds upon a solid history of research and innovation to benefit students, their colleges and universities, the laboratory, and our nation.”

DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Site Restoration Mark Gilbertson said the program is important to the department due to the large amount of work necessary over the coming years. “These students are the future workers for accomplishing our goals so it’s really important. They get a chance to see what type of work needs to be done, what type of environmental problems we face, and they can bring new ideas and solutions to help solve that in a much more efficient and effective manner.”

South Carolina State University Microbiology Professor Dr. Waltena Simpson said this type of cooperative effort with the laboratory is vital to student education and preparing them for the future. “This gives our students an opportunity to interact with investigators from the Savannah River National Laboratory. It also gives them the opportunity to understand more in depth the type of research that is going on at labs such as this. They would not have that opportunity if they did not engage in these types of conferences.”

“I think this is a wonderful opportunity for all young people involved to have a hand in the environment. Growing up I always had a love for nature and this gives us an opportunity to show the research we have been working on and allows us to network with scientists and bridge the gap in the community,” said Clinton Junior College student Miguel Talford. “It’s good to be around other students to bounce ideas off of one another and have a meeting of minds of people we may be working with in the near future. It’s a great program to get a lot of young people involved and the focus of being a diverse company is one of the best aspects they offer.”

The Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) is a multi-program applied research and development laboratory for the U.S. Department of Energy. SRNL applies state-of-the-art science and engineering to provide practical, high-value, cost-effective solutions for our nation’s environmental cleanup, nuclear security and clean energy challenges. Visit us on the web at <http://srnl.doe.gov>

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