

Feed the Future Food Systems for Nutrition Innovation Lab Activity Brief - MSI Engagement 2023-2024

A Unique Student Opportunity Between the 1890 Universities Foundation and the Feed the Future Food Systems for Nutrition Innovation Lab at Tufts University

Since 2021, the Feed the Future Food Systems for Nutrition Innovation Lab has been part of a collaboration with the 1890 Universities Foundation. The overall goal of the collaboration is to define human and institutional capacity-building needs for 19 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States, plan activities around their needs, and support the professional development of their students within the global food systems for nutrition context.

Based on this commitment, a student working group comprised of students from the 19 institutions that make up the 1890 Universities Foundation was created. Student applications were vetted through a competitive outside review process. Six exceptional students from these HBCUs were selected to be a part of the first-ever student working group.



Student working group and leadership (L-R): Ivan Solomon (Tuskegee University), Yazmine Thomas (University of Maryland Eastern Shore), Anjula Sagam (Tennessee State University), Judith Boateng (Faculty mentor - Alabama A&M University), Dr. Jewel H. Bronaugh (President - 1890 Universities Foundation), Kyla Thurston (Tuskegee University), Divine Boka (Tennessee State University), and Mariam Yakubu (Alabama A&M University). Photo credit: Quintin Gray.

MSI Engagement Activity Brief | Key Highlights from FY2024

FY2024 Working Group Impacts and Outcomes

This past year, the student working group focused on creating survey tools for the collection of faculty and student data to assist FSN-IL and 1890 leadership in identifying gaps in academic areas related to global food systems nutrition. The students also created webinars for their fellow students that supported learning about food systems and working in a global environment. Moreover, through their participation in international and US-based USAID leadership and research conferences, they have begun to build networks and cultivate additional collaborations to support their academic work and future career trajectories. These students have single-handedly fostered connections with experts who work in the global food systems space that can be leveraged by all students in the 1890 community to broaden their knowledge and assist with career advancement.

The impact of increasing diversity in the field through this MSI working group is twofold. First, professional development opportunities for youth increase their technical skills and ensure their future success within the field of global food systems. Students from minority serving groups have unique lived experiences that can be used to inform future food systems solutions. By empowering them with the technical skills to hold decision-making roles, we work towards an inclusive field that engages with diverse perspectives and expertise.

FY2025 Working Group Selection

Six new students will be selected to form a new student working group in FY2025. These students will be mentored by the first student working group. The new students will be tasked with implementing the survey results with the goal of supporting curriculum development on nutrition-sensitive solutions in the HBCUs in the 1890 community.