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Georgia Southern University public health researchers awarded W.K. Kellogg Foundation contract

JULY 2, 2008



The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University has been awarded a contract valued at nearly \$200,000 to provide evaluation services for 'New Tools, New Visions 2,' a three-year initiative funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. The new initiative will focus on public health in four Georgia cities: Albany, Augusta, Fort Valley, and Savannah.

"We are pleased to work with the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health for the evaluation services for this initiative," said Terri Wright, program director for the Kellogg Foundation. "Their faculty's community-based health expertise, combined with their focus on rural health issues and partnerships across the state make them an ideal partner in this initiative."

'New Tools, New Visions 2' will use a community-based participatory research approach to address racial and ethnic disparities in health. The initiative will focus specifically on environmental justice and violence prevention issues identified by African American communities in the four cities, and its goal is to create new, culturally relevant and effective tools that will improve health in their regions. Environmental justice focuses on challenging the unequal burden that environmental conditions have had on the health and well-being of communities of color and low-income communities.

'Working with the Kellogg Foundation will increase our visibility as we seek to achieve our mission of eliminating health disparities in rural and underserved populations,' said Dean Charles Hardy. 'As researchers, our faculty members have tremendous experience in providing program evaluations, teaching capacity-building skills, and assisting communities to improve the conditions in which all people can be healthy.'

Faculty participants in the contract include Mondie Mason, assistant professor of community health and health behavior; Cassandra Arroyo, assistant professor of epidemiology; Simone Charles,

assistant professor of environmental health sciences; and Padmini Shankar, associate professor of nutrition and food science. Shankar teaches in the University's College of Health and Human Sciences. The four will be assisted by public health doctoral student Raymona Lawrence, who will learn and practice new skills as part of the evaluation team.

'Once the Kellogg Foundation saw our focus on rural health issues and our partnerships across the state, they were enthused about awarding the evaluation contract to Georgia Southern University," said Mason. 'Our job will be to use our research skills to assist communities as they address their most urgent needs. This is a participatory project, and we want everyone academics and community members alike to bring their expertise to the table.'