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**Environmental Research for Tennessee State University
Undergraduates Enhanced by National Science Foundation Grant**

Nashville, TN – (August 7, 2009) – The National Science Foundation has awarded a grant of \$614,520 to Tennessee State University to enhance minority undergraduate student research experiences in Ecology and Environmental Science.

Under the direction of Dr. Dafeng Hui, Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, the award will establish an Undergraduate Research and Mentoring in the Biological Sciences (URM) program designed to increase the number of under-represented minority students who are motivated and prepared to pursue graduate studies in Ecology and Environmental Science.

A cohort of six students will be recruited each year in the first three years of the grant, and NSF funds will be used to support each undergraduate participant for a total of two years. Over the 4-year period of the grant, a total of eighteen students will participate in the program.

Hui said the TSU URM program will be poised to make a significant contribution to the field of ecology and environmental science by offering intensive year-round research training and mentoring for undergraduates. "We are dedicated to this effort of preparing undergraduate students for this level of research," he said.

"This program will provide a unique opportunity for TSU students who are interested in environmental science", said Dr. Terrance Johnson, Professor and Chair of the Department, also one of the faculty mentors of the program.

"At least six faculty members from three departments at TSU have committed to serving as mentors for students conducting research in ecological and environmental disciplines including global change ecology, microbial ecology, environmental biology, water quality, bio/phytoremediation, and ecological modeling," he explained.

In addition, the students will undergo GRE preparation, have the opportunity to spend a summer at one of the NSF research-intensive universities to enhance their experience in research and present their work at a scientific meeting.

Additional information is available by visiting <http://www.tnstate.edu/NSF-URM>.

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