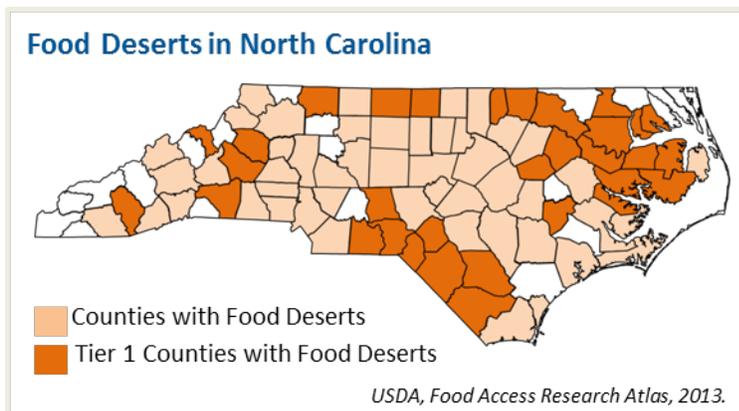


Researchers across Four N.C. A&T Colleges Secure NSF Award to Model Regional Food Security

Greensboro, NC – September, 2018 – Dr. Manoj Jha, an associate professor in the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering in the College of Engineering, has received a \$750,000 research award from the National Science Foundation. The grant will fund the modeling of linkages between biophysical processes and socio-economic factors and how these impact agricultural production and food consumption patterns. Principal Investigator (PI) Jha is joined by co-PIs Dr. Chyi Lyi (Kathleen) Liang in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Dr. Lyubov Kurkalova in the College of Business and Economics, Dr. Greg Monty in the College of Engineering and Dr. Leila Hashemi Beni in the College of Science and Technology. The team also includes Dr. Timothy Mulrooney, associate professor in the Department of Environmental, Earth and Geospatial Sciences at North Carolina Central University.



The existence of areas with low accessibility to healthy foods, known as food deserts, have been identified as a serious issue contributing to food insecurity in both urban and rural regions in the United States, especially in areas where minority populations reside. Integrated, interdisciplinary research is needed to examine and understand the multi-dimensional

and complex problems that lead to this condition, and ways to mitigate it.

“The problem of food insecurity is a complex one,” explains Jha. “It exists at the intersection of natural factors like agricultural productivity and water quality and human factors such as consumer choice and public policy. The complexity of this problem supports the complexity of our team; five researchers in five departments across two HBCUs will bring their modeling expertise to bear on finding a solution to eliminate food deserts.”

Jha’s team commences three and a half years’ of research in September 2018, focusing on geographically varied communities in North Carolina with changing demographic profiles. The

project includes educational experiences for underrepresented undergraduate as well as graduate students, further building research capacity. The project also involves engagement with stakeholders such as local and state planning agencies, extension agents, agricultural producers, and food retailers.

The goal of this research project is to better understand the factors that contribute to improving food accessibility, while maximizing agricultural production and minimizing negative environmental impacts on the land and water used in food production. Having a broad, interdisciplinary team will contribute to the design, development and delivery of policy-relevant information for use at the state, county and city level, to support food security going forward.

About North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is the nation's largest historically black university. It is a land-grant, higher research university and constituent member of the University of North Carolina System. N.C. A&T is known for its leadership in producing graduates in engineering, agriculture and other STEM fields. The university was founded in 1891 and is located in Greensboro, North Carolina. N.C. A&T has provided over 125 years of exemplary graduate and undergraduate instruction, transformative research and intentional community engagement.



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