Ten new Academy for Global Engagement fellows ready for world challenges

From a focus on autonomous vehicles to improving the reliability of the power system in remote areas of Africa – 10 new fellows in the Michigan State University Academy for Global Engagement (AGE) are ready to take on challenges around the world.

The 2017 AGE fellows represent a diversity of collaborative efforts and interests. Fellows are from the College of Engineering and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. They were announced at MSU's Global Innovation Forum on Dec. 5 in the Kellogg Center.

Now in its fourth year, the academy is designed to create a new generation of international research experts at MSU by offering early- to mid-career faculty the opportunity to expand their scholarship on a global level, said AGE co-director Gretchen Neisler.

“This nationally recognized program was created to strengthen MSU’s global networks and introduce faculty to new global resources,” she said. “The end result is an innovative faculty development program model and undeniable return on investment that benefits the faculty and the MSU community as a whole.”

Mary Anne Walker, co-director of the AGE, said the academy builds a fellow’s capacity to launch large-scale, high-impact international research programs and create a growing cohort of global problem solvers.

“Fellows are trained to leverage connections, resources, knowledge, and skills obtained throughout their fellowship to advance their own global research,” Walker explained. “They are also positioned to serve as future mentors, helping to preserve MSU’s legacy as a dynamic and collaborative academic institution of higher learning.”

Throughout the year, AGE fellows participate in monthly seminars that include building networks with funding agencies, refining their research agenda and navigating MSU’s grant system. The fellows also will have an opportunity to learn from seasoned research faculty at MSU through a mentoring system.
The 2017 AGE fellows are:

- **Annick Anctil**, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering. Her research topics include the sustainability of energy material extraction and photovoltaics/solar energy in sub-Saharan Africa. Her work investigates increasing solar penetration in Africa that can increase electricity in remote locations and improve the reliability of the power system while reducing air pollution associated with fossil fuels. Her mentor is Laura Schmitt-Olabisi, Department of Community Sustainability.

- **Andre Benard**, associate professor of mechanical engineering in the College of Engineering. His research is on sustainability and energy production systems with applications in water purification, recycling, and energy. His interests include sustainable manufacturing technology and their best practices, primarily in Europe. His mentor is Ramani Narayan, Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science.

- **Timothy Gates**, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering in the College of Engineering. His focus is on connected and autonomous vehicles, and adapting current transportation infrastructure to this technological evolution. He hopes to grow partnerships with world-leading international collaborators in Europe. His mentor is Mark Wilson, School of Planning, Design, and Construction.

- **Jennifer Hodbod**, assistant professor of community sustainability in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Her research explores the environmental, social, and economic sustainability of food systems that can equitably feed growing global populations, while adapting to climate change, economic shocks, and changing food preferences. Her focus will be on Ethiopia and Kenya. Her mentor is Bruno Basso in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences.
• **Amor Ines**, assistant professor of plant, soil, and microbial sciences in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. His research occurs at the nexus of agriculture, food, water and climate, and includes advanced modeling techniques to inform decision-making in agricultural production systems, anticipating global change and flux. He will focus on the Philippines, East Africa, and the Lower Mekong Basin. His mentor is Jeff Andreson, Department of Geography.

• **Suk-Kyung Kim**, associate professor in the School of Planning, Design, and Construction in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Kim’s research focuses on the design of green and sustainable housing. She plans to expand her research in Korea, Japan, and Germany due to their progress with climate-resilient housing plans and policies. Her advisor is Rigoberto Burgueño, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

• **Brent Ross**, associate professor of agriculture, food, and resource economics in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He plans to extend his work with the MSU Product Center to develop and evaluation programs to enhance the viability and success of entrepreneurial food ventures. His work focuses on Nairobi, Kenya, and he hopes to extend the scope to other countries in Africa, as well as emerging regions in South America such as Peru, which is actively establishing programs to promote entrepreneurial food systems and new ventures.

• **Jason Rowntree**, assistant professor of animal science in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He plans to establish an interdisciplinary research team with Kenyan collaborators to investigate grazing techniques of pastoralist communities in northern and southern Kenya. His mentor is Jinhua Zhao jointly appointed in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Resource Economics, and Department of Economics, also the Director of the Environmental Science & Policy Program.

• **Ahmet Cagri Ulusoy**, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering in the College of Engineering. His research centers on microelectronic technology, with applications in cancer research and beyond. His countries of focus include Turkey and Germany. His mentor is Wolfgang Bauer, Department of Physics and Astronomy/Cyclotron.

• **Yuying Xie**, assistant professor of computational mathematics, science, and engineering in the colleges of Engineering and Natural Science. His research interests focuses on machine learning and clarifying and interpreting large data sets to discover more details about the micro biome, genomics, and their effect on disease as well as developing diagnostic protocol for immunologic assessment for cancer. He is interested in the Beijing Genomics Institute and West China School of Stomatology in China, and his mentor is Evangelyn Alocilja, Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering.

The Academy has trained 29 fellows, who have secured more than $6 million in research funding from dozens of new
sources. Fellows have authored 124 joint research publications with international partners in the last three years.


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