

December 08, 2008

## N.C. State, N.C. A&T State announce historic endowment



UNC System President Erskine Bowles, NC A&T State Chancellor Stanly F. Battle, Ricardo Salvador of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and NC State Chancellor James L. Oblinger participated in the CEFS grant announcement event. *(Photo by Becky Kirkland)*

the university. This is also an excellent example of how sister institutions can work together for sustainable development all across North Carolina."

Telling the story of his personal ties to agriculture, Bowles said, "With our rich agricultural history, I can't think of a better place than North Carolina to build sustainable food economies. This will put us in the forefront of what I believe is a growing industry."

The W.K. Kellogg Endowed Chair in Community Based Food Systems awards N.C. State and N.C. A&T State \$1.575 million each.

"This award will make a real difference in the lives of the people of North Carolina, from farmers struggling with difficult economic times to consumers looking to put a healthy meal on the table," said N.C. State Chancellor James L. Oblinger.

Oblinger was associate dean for Academic Programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences when CEFS was created in 1994. "Back then, I saw not just tremendous opportunities for students, but also for research and extension that are relevant and responsive," he said.

Ricardo Salvador, program director with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, described how the foundation is endowing chairs at select universities across the country, in an effort to establish a network of 14.

"We are extremely pleased to add N.C. A&T State and N.C. State to this peerless group of institutions that are leaders in the agricultural realm," Salvador said. "N.C. A&T State and N.C. State have been leaders in community-based food systems."

Speaking of the "precarious energy environment" in which we live and its interconnectedness to the global food supply, Salvador painted a picture of a very challenging – and critical – time for universities to make a difference.

Nearly 75 people packed into a conference room at UNC General Administration on a soggy fall day – Election Day, no less. They were there to celebrate a \$3.15 million endowment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, in support of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) and its efforts to build a sustainable, community-based food economy statewide.

The first of its kind, the award will create two endowed chairs – one at N.C. State University and one at N.C. A&T State University – as well as support CEFS efforts to increase production, processing, distribution and consumption of local, sustainably raised foods in North Carolina.

"This is an historic day," said Erskine Bowles, president of the UNC system. "We've never had a dual endowment in

"There is nothing more relevant that N.C. State and N.C. A&T State could be doing now," he said. "That is what we are investing in. We envision a future food system that creates benefits fairly and in perpetuity for all."

N.C. A&T State University Chancellor Stanley F. Battle also delivered remarks at the event, as did Simon Rich, chair of the CEFS Board of Advisers.

Chancellor Oblinger best summed up the spirit of the celebration, saying, "This is a great day for the university system, it's a great day for our two institutions, and it's a great day for agriculture in North Carolina."

-S. Stanard