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Indiana University Kokomo Professor Receives National Science Foundation Grant

campus-news

October 6, 2011

KOKOMO, Ind. – A \$173,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) has been awarded to an Indiana University Kokomo faculty member, which will provide funding for research opportunities, equipment, and undergraduate student support during the next four years.



(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/iukokomo/6218826009/>)

TJ Sullivan wins NSF grant.

T.J. Sullivan, assistant professor of molecular ecology in the Department of Science, Mathematics and Informatics, was the recipient of one of 11,500 competitive grants awarded from a pool of 45,000 requests received by the Foundation. Sullivan, along with a colleague from Hope College, of Holland, Michigan, plans to study the relationship between particular toxic and non-toxic grasses that could ultimately affect livestock.

“The effects of toxic grass can slowly poison livestock if they eat too much of it,” Sullivan said of the importance of the study. “The cattle or sheep will not gain weight, will have a decrease in milk production, and, in severe cases, can result in gangrene in their hooves.”

By studying different species of a native grass that is widespread throughout the United States, Sullivan's goal is to determine why fungus that lives in some grasses can be toxic, but not in others. Students will have the opportunity to assist Sullivan in his research.

"This gives our students an active role in research going on here at IU Kokomo," he said. "The ability to bring in money from the outside will result in a better project."

Sullivan noted that the application and selection process is a lengthy one – nine months – because of required criteria and scientists' reviews and critiques prior to approval.



Chancellor Michael Harris said this is a reflection of the dedication and commitment of faculty at IU Kokomo in providing first-class education to north central Indiana.

"I would like to congratulate T.J. for his exceptional achievement in obtaining this prestigious grant," Harris said. "The NSF award is a clear indicator that Indiana University Kokomo is becoming a world class campus."

"Our faculty who conduct research with the participation of our students demonstrates excellent educational opportunities our students that is relevant to the needs of the region. Conducting undergraduate research has been proven to be key element in academic excellence and student success, as well as allowing our students a variety of opportunities as they graduate."

Sullivan received his bachelor's degree in biology from Carlton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and his doctorate from Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. He came to IU Kokomo in August 2010 after completing a postdoctoral fellowship and serving as a visiting assistant professor at Hope College.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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