



**Alliance for Graduate Education & the Professoriate**  
affiliate of the Michigan AGEP Alliance

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## AGEP Visits Capitol Hill in 2015

EAST LANSING, Michigan, March 13, 2015—The MSU CAFFE program created an exciting new opportunity for graduate students and post-docs in natural science, engineering, social science and educational to learn about science policy by interacting with federal policy makers. To that end, The Graduate School invited a group of participants of the MSU AGEP (Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate) Learning Community to visit the Michigan Legislative Delegation in Washington DC.



(Left-Right) Yolanda Brooks, Tony Nunez, Fredy Rodriguez and Noraica Daliva at Senator Stabenow's Office

In preparation for the visit, selected AGEP members participated in a series of training sessions during the spring semester, with Mary Malaspina, MSU Washington Office Assistant Director to learn about the structure and organization of Congress, the federal appropriation process and how to communicate effectively with policy makers. This training prepared the MSU participants to inform their elected representatives about the public impact of their research and its dependency upon funding from federal agencies; this visit to Capitol Hill took place on February 20, 2015.

"It is hard for the staff to know everything that is happening in their districts, said Dr. Yolanda Brooks, recent MSU doctoral graduate. "One of the ways to do that is to inform them of our research at MSU," Dr. Brooks remarked.

In addition to the educational aspects of the Congressional visits, the students and post-docs used this opportunity to explain to their representatives how the AGEP Community has been at the core of their success in their doctoral programs. The students and post-docs were organized into teams, and had conversations with the office staff of Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, as well as with the office staff of House Representatives David Trott, Dan Benishek, Justin Amash, Sandy Levin, Candice Miller, Dan Kildee, Mike Bishop, Debbie Dingell, Tim Walberg, and John Conyers.

"Each congressional staff member was very impressed with the diversity of research topics and personal stories we brought to the table," said Fredy Rodriguez, graduate student in the MSU Anthropology program. "I emphasized the impact that AGEP has had in the lives of many graduate students, including myself, in terms of offering a tremendous source of support," Fredy recalled.

For more information about the MSU AGEP Community or the CAFFE program, contact Steven Thomas ([deshawn@grd.msu.edu](mailto:deshawn@grd.msu.edu)) at 517-432-3268.

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