



1890 Universities Foundation

In April 2021, Dr. Antonio McLaren joined the 1890 Universities Foundation as the Vice President for Program Innovation and Implementation. In this role, he assists in the mobilization of resources to facilitate broad-based educational and outreach programs, initiatives, and approaches across the 1890 land-grant institutions to help them respond to new/emerging opportunities and challenges in the 21st century.

Prior to this appointment, Dr. McLaren worked for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) as a National Program Leader between September 2015 and June 2020. In this role, he provided national leadership, management, and support for NIFA's 1890 portfolio, which includes the following six programs: 1890 Capacity Building Grants, 1890 Facilities Grants, 1890 Extension, 1890 Agricultural Research, 1890 Scholarships, and 1890 Centers of Excellence Programs. Additionally, he has experience in managing other NIFA competitive grant programs, including the Higher Education Challenge Grants, and Alaska-Native Serving, Native-Hawaiian Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Programs.

Previously, Dr. McLaren worked for USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach as the USDA/1890 Program Liaison at Virginia State University (VSU) – a position that he maintained between March 2011 and September 2015. As Program Liaison, he worked to increase programmatic capacity for research, education, and extension programs by providing outreach to the VSU community, linking university faculty and staff to competitive grant opportunities, and recruiting students to study agriculture and related fields at VSU. Prior to this role, Dr. McLaren worked as a NIFA program specialist from 2003 until 2011. As a program specialist, he provided program support for several programs, including the Agriculture Markets and Trade, Agriculture Risk Management Education, and the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Programs. In total, Dr. McLaren has more than 22 years of Federal service – all with USDA.

Dr. McLaren's USDA career began in 1997, as he was awarded a scholarship through the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program. Through the scholarship, he was afforded the opportunity to gain work experience through the Summer Career Experience Program (SCEP), which provided internship opportunities to undergraduate students. He credits the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program for giving him a strong foundation and passion for serving the public through the 1890 Land-Grant University partnership.

Dr. McLaren earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Business/Economics in 2001, and his Master of Arts degree in Economics and Finance in 2003 – both from Virginia State University. In May 2015, he graduated with a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University.

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