

# ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION EXPERIENCES

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## NEED FOR INNOVATION

The dynamic fields of science and agriculture require future leaders who are innovative and can solve complex problems. However, there's a communication gap between scientists and the public, as noted by the USDA's Science Blueprint.

To prepare the next generation of scientists, the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) launched the Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (REEU) program. Recognizing the potential for broader impact, NIFA proposed creating an Education Coordination Network (ECN) to enhance awareness and collaboration between REEU programs.

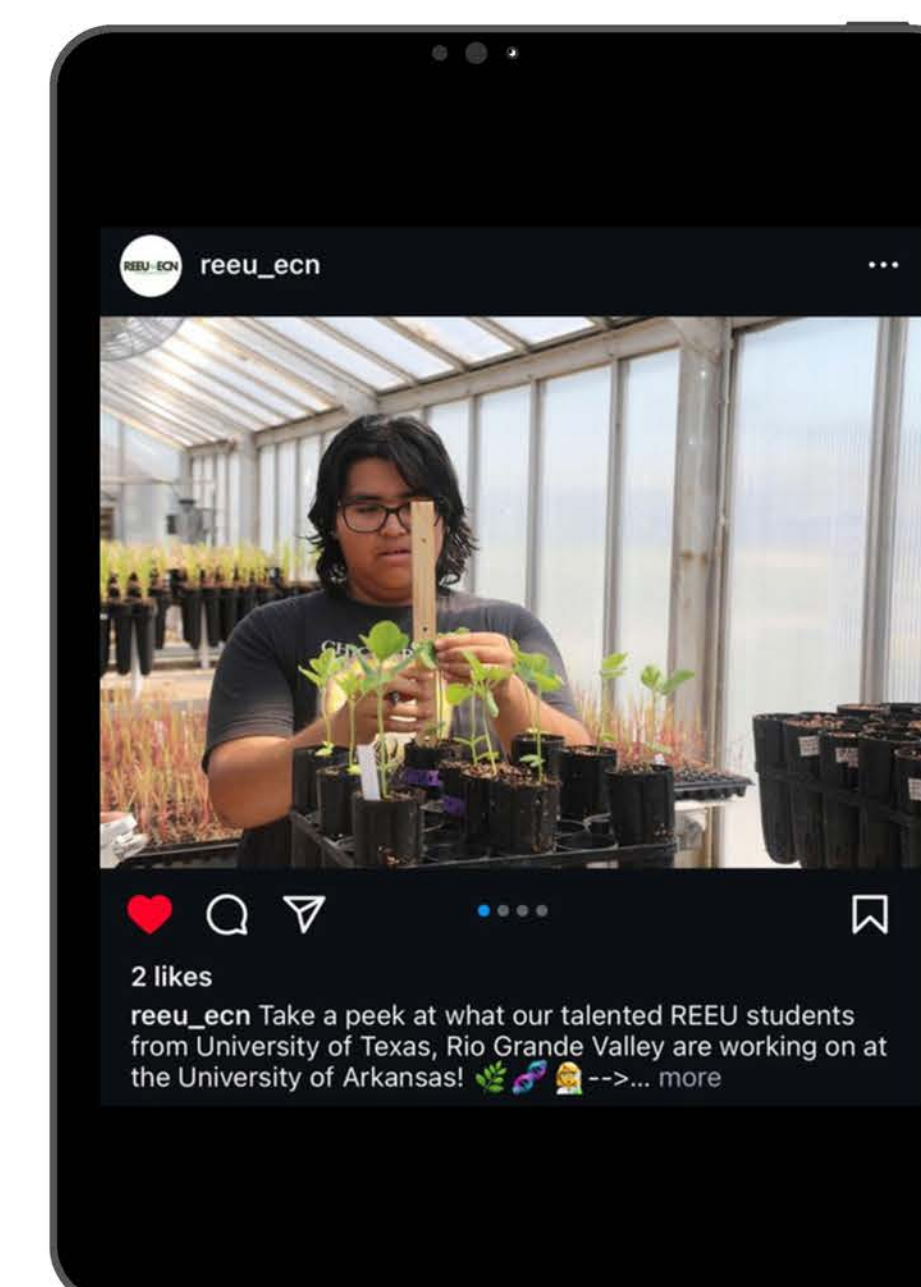


## HOW IT WORKS

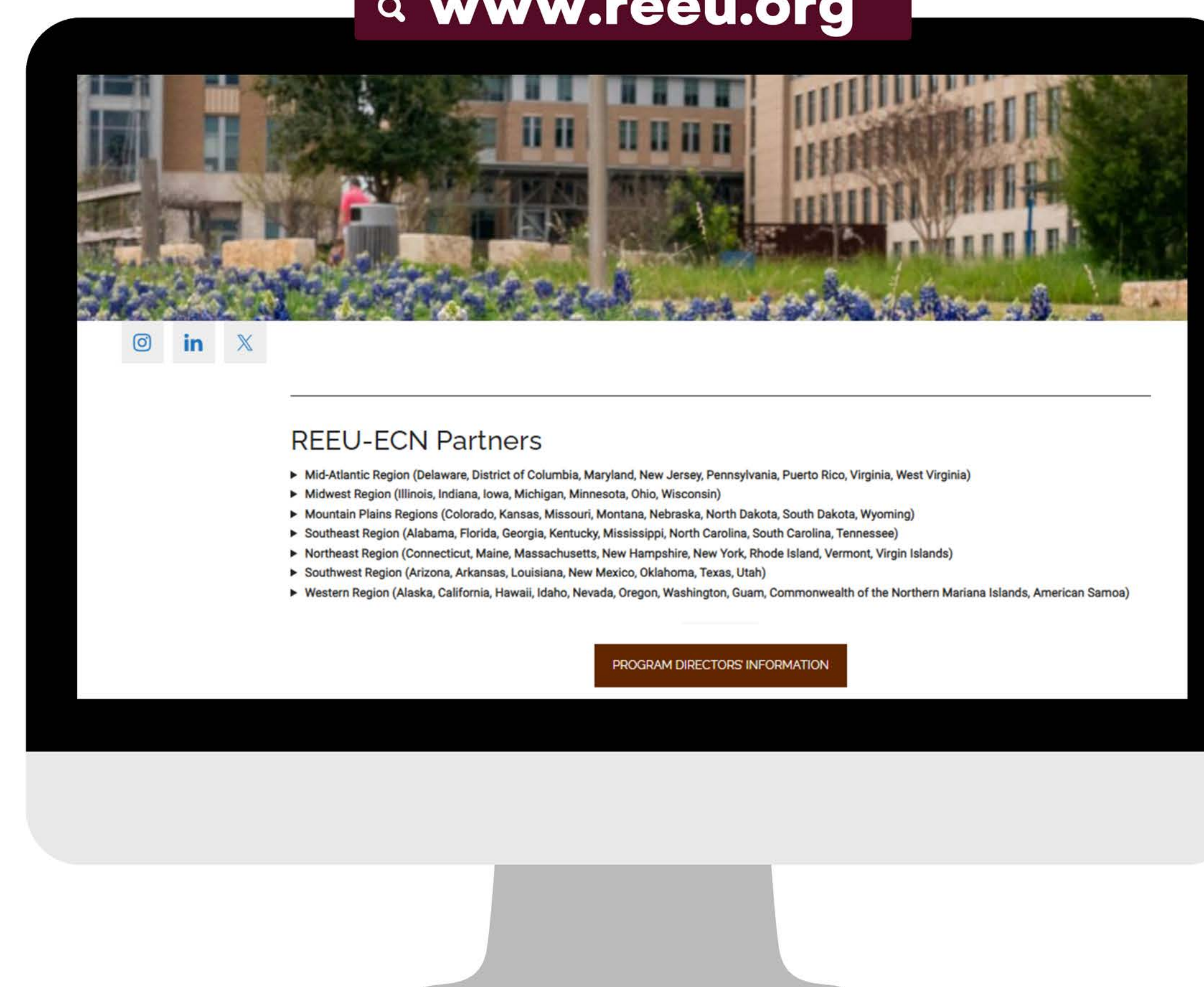
- We formed a REEU Community of Practice (CoP) by inviting REEU PDs to join a rotating advisory board.
- This CoP uses centralized systems to facilitate communication, collaboration, and public engagement through virtual workshops, a digital clearinghouse, and secure collaboration platforms like Microsoft 365 and Teams.
- The REEU-ECN also includes a website and social media platforms to boost outreach. 

## RESULTS TO DATE

- We launched the REEU-ECN with an event bringing together PDs, mentors, and stakeholders.
- We established a collaboration network of more than 40 users and successfully integrated onboarding for new PDs.
- We created a website to serve as a centralized location for showcasing PD profiles, REEU programs, upcoming events, activities, and highlights



www.reeu.org



## RESULTS TO DATE

- A logo competition provided REEU students with the opportunity to showcase their creativity and design skills and contribute to helping capture the meaning of REEU-ECN.
- Workshops and meetings optimize REEU experiences and promote the program.



## FUTURE PLANS/ ADVICE TO OTHERS

- Improve the website and collaboration spaces based on user feedback, streamlining processes and boosting participation.
- Host regular events to foster community engagement and offer development opportunities tailored to participant needs.
- Continue PD meetings to encourage collaboration and planning and leverage social media to enhance program outreach.

## COSTS/RESOURCES NEEDED

Dr. Jason Peake will evaluate the REEU-ECN. Institutional resources are allocated for IT services to ensure secure and reliable systems.