**Higher Education Challenge Grant Project**

**‘Enhancing Educational Outcomes for Plant Genetic Resources Conservation and Use’**

**Meeting notes February 6, 2024, 10 am MST**

Present: Pat Byrne, CSU Soil and Crop Sciences

Jill Zarestky, CSU School of Education

Kat Chen, CSU/NLGRP

Deana Namuth-Covert, CSU College of Agricultural Sciences

Gayle Volk, USDA-ARS, Fort Collins

1. Pat:
   * Several members of the Advisory Council met with Gayle and Pat on Jan. 31 to discuss future funding of the HEC project. Council members agreed that the project met a unique need and encouraged efforts to secure additional funding. Tara Moreau suggested checking the Global Environmental Fund, which includes funding for crop wild relatives. Clare Coyne (USDA and Washington State Univ., Pullman) offered to take the lead on a new HEC project proposal, potentially focusing on small-scale seed conservation. However, the deadline is March 5.
   * Assibi has taken a position with USDA and is no longer with ISU. Stephen Gray is now being advised by Walter Suza. Stephen has started a job in the seed industry, but plans to finish his thesis and graduate some time this year.
2. Gayle:

* CSU Online courses discussion with Geoff Morris, Jan. 30. Geoff may not be able to teach the courses in the future, at least not every year. One possibility is that his wife, Davina Rhodes in Horticulture, could take over Courses 1 and 3, with Gayle continuing to teach Course 2 (Conservation). Geoff and Davina will discuss with their department heads. Meanwhile, Crop Trust has shared results of their course evaluation survey by students they funded. Results were generally favorable, though several students thought the courses required too much work while they were working full-time jobs.
* Travels and projects. Gayle has recently visited NPGS sites in Miami and Puerto Rico, recording videos and soliciting success stories for GRIN-U. She’s currently in Arizona, where she will visit with curators of the Desert Legume collection, which is affiliated with NPGS.

1. Jill:

* Evaluation of CSU Online Courses. A request to complete the online survey was sent out last week, and Geoff followed up with a reminder to the students this week.
* Survey of GRIN-U users. There has been about a 25% response rate for the survey.

1. Gary was not able to attend, but emailed that the next GRIN-U newsletter will be sent on Feb. 12.
2. Deana will send the latest ebook usage stats. She will contact Tara Moreau about the Crop Wild Relative symposium in Denver in September.
3. Kat:

* There will be about 20 items to include in the upcoming GRIN-U newsletter.
* Translation of the Crop Wild Relatives ebook into Spanish is underway.
* Current projects include potato videos from Sturgeon Bay, WI, cryopreservation ebook chapters, and success stories.

1. Pat:

* The Semilla project at Spur (tours and presentations to students from high-minority high schools) will continue this semester. Pat will present on Feb. 21 and March 6.
* A potential article on our project’s Spur activities (outreach on ag topics to an urban audience) was discussed. Pat will contact the communications staff at Spur.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, March 5, 10 am-11:30 am MST