

Prairie View hosts first Synthetic Biology Symposium



Students and faculty gathered on April 20th to take part in the university's first Synthetic Biology Symposium led by Dr. Raul Cuero, a scientist in the Cooperative Agricultural Research Center. The goal of the symposium was to offer information about synthetic biology as a field of study as well as highlight student research in the field being conducted at PVAMU.

The event was sponsored by SynBerc, the Synthetic Biology Engineering Research Center. SynBerc is a partnership between Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Prairie View A&M University, Stanford University as well as the University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, San Francisco.

According to SynBerc, synthetic biology is the "construction of new biological entities such as enzymes, genetic circuits, and cells of the redesign of existing biological systems." Cuero said on its own, biology is not always functional, but the discipline is integrated with engineering to make it functional.

"We want everyone to understand what synthetic biology is, especially now when the economic situation is affecting us. In the vein of science and technology, only novelty and innovation is going to make the difference. We are fortunate that Prairie View is part of this new paradigm," Cuero said.

President George C. Wright offered his support of the research partnership. "The research endeavor is very important to this university. I understand the value of research," he said. "We're glad to be a part of this relationship."

"I'm very happy that we are able to lead in a new paradigm of science," Cuero said. "When you are at the genesis of any concept, that's when you become empowered."