June 23, 2011

Two get graduate student research awards

Two students from Valley City State University (VCSU) have been selected to receive Graduate Student Research Assistantship (GSRA) awards through the North Dakota Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (ND EPSCoR) program. The awards recognize the academic achievement of these students and provide significant financial support as they pursue M.S. and/or Ph.D. degrees in science, engineering, and mathematics at the University of North Dakota (UND) and North Dakota State University (NDSU).

David Givers, ND EPSCoR co-project director, said, “The goal of ND EPSCoR is to enhance the research capability of scientists in North Dakota, so we look for students who have an excellent track record in their undergraduate program and are well prepared for continued study at the graduate level. Valley City State University can be very proud that its students rank high in the competition for this award.”

EPSCoR was established by the National Science Foundation and is now a family of competitive merit-based programs spanning seven federal research and development agencies: the National Science Foundation; the National Institutes of Health; the Departments of Defense, Energy, and Agriculture; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and the Environmental Protection Agency.

ND EPSCoR implemented the GSRA program to increase opportunities for graduating seniors from the North Dakota University System baccalaureate universities, or who have been participants in ND EPSCoR’s Nurturing American Tribal undergraduate Research and Education (NATURE) program, to obtain M.S. and/or Ph.D. degrees at NDSU and UND. Each student’s award provides an $18,000 per year stipend for up to 24 months. Students who complete the program can be eligible for a ND EPSCoR Doctoral Dissertation Award that provides support to complete their doctoral research upon completion of their course work and written examinations.

The VCSU students receiving the awards are:

Fakira (Soumaila) Borkovec (Rome, Italy): Fakira has majors in Health Science and Biology. She will be working in the North Dakota State University Department of Cereal and Food Science program, Pulse Crop Quality and Nutrition, using crop breeding techniques to improve their nutritional value and reduce malnutrition in the world. She will have the opportunity to travel to Sri Lanka to work in a children's hospital analyzing the effect of various lentils child blood chemistry.

Jesse Martin (Valley City, ND): Jesse has a major in Chemistry and Health Science and has consistently been one of the top students in the Department. He will attend the graduate chemistry program at North Dakota State University and conduct research with Dr. Mukund Sibi beginning Fall semester 2011.

Fakira and Jesse join four other VCSU graduates from last year that received EPSCOR awards: Jacob Mertes (Omaha, NE), Michael Tomlinson (Rolla), Ryan McCulloch (Valley City), and Steven Fasching (Mandan).