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UM Student Serves on World Food Security Committee

Rohan Agrawal was one of four U.S. college students selected for meeting in Rome

NOVEMBER 13, 2019 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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UM junior Rohan Agrawal visits the Food and Agriculture Organization bowl that highlights the Zero Hunger Goal of the UN. Photo by Dan Reed/PlanetForward.org

OXFORD, Miss. – Attending an international summit on world food security proved an unforgettable experience for a **University of Mississippi** junior who was among an elite group selected to attend the event.

“As I stepped foot in the plenary hall on the first day of the conference, I felt myself being surrounded by the world,” said Rohan Agrawal, a **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College** student who attended the Committee on World Food Security at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations headquarters in Rome.

Agrawal was one of only four U.S. college students awarded a **Planet Forward** scholarship to the meeting, where he met with foreign diplomats, including the leader of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s agricultural development team.

“The opportunity to meet with so many global leaders and discuss the role of technology in important issues like poverty, hunger, education and climate change is something I will always treasure,” he said.

Agrawal became interested in using technology to revolutionize agriculture, conserve resources and increase yields before leaving his home in Central India to attend Ole Miss. The **computer science** major, who is pursuing minors in international relations and mathematics, spoke before the United Nations General Assembly earlier this year as part of an Honors College-sponsored trip to New York.

During the meeting, Agrawal had an opportunity to interact with keynote speaker María Juliana Ruiz Sandoval, the first lady of Colombia, and interview her about Colombia’s plans for enhancing its technical resiliency to engage more youth.

Experiencing food supply shortages while growing up, Agrawal has written and published his observations about poverty, hunger and climate change in several compelling essays.

“One of the most startling things I’ve noticed is how wasteful the United States is when it comes to food,” Agrawal said. “In India, healthy food is scarce, but in the U.S. there’s plenty of food being grown. Still, it isn’t being properly managed and used by the masses.

“Globally, 40 percent of the world’s food supply is wasted. That amounts to \$1 trillion annually.”

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Campus Briefs

Students Learn ‘Real Politics’ in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates’

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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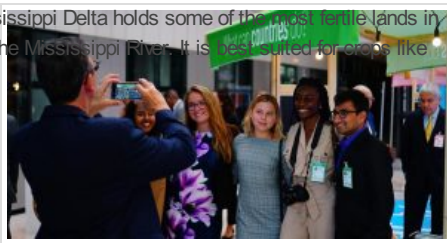
Ole Miss In the News

Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve’s

Agrawal wrote in his competition essay: "The Mississippi Delta holds some of the most fertile lands in the country for agriculture due to the presence of the Mississippi River. It is best suited for crops like beans, whole grains and the like, that are not only healthy but also sustainable for the environment."

"Instead, the state abundantly cultivates corn and soybeans, crops that wreak havoc on the environment. Farmers only want to grow certain crops that are subsidized by the government under the Farm Bill – corn and soybeans being the two major subsidized crops."



Rohan Agrawal (right) poses for photos with students from across the country attending the Committee on World Food Security conference. Photo by Dan Reed/PlanetForward.org

During the conference in Rome, Agrawal also learned that only 15 people on the earth control \$1 trillion of the global economy.

"If just those 15 people were to create an endowment, the interest from it would yield \$50 billion, which is enough to get every child on this planet through higher upper secondary education," he said.

Agrawal's passion about climate change, agriculture and technology led him to create his own applied research. He is working to create an energy "dashboard" that will measure energy use at Ole Miss.

"I'm seeking to track water and energy utilization in every building across our campus, place the data into a virtual reality software that would allow anyone to monitor all these uses in real time," Agrawal said. "Several other universities our size already have such capabilities and are using them to optimize energy consumption."

"I'm trying to see that the University of Mississippi keeps up with the issues that affect us all."

Following the meeting, Agrawal will write another paper about his experiences and submit it to Planet Forward for publication. Ultimately, he hopes to raise awareness and promote activism around climate change.

"Rohan's extraordinary commitment as citizen and scholar sets him apart not just as a leader in our academic community, but as a distinctive voice within the communities of nations," said Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez, Honors College dean. "We are very proud that he represents the SMBHC and our University of Mississippi among national leaders pushing for sustainable development for all peoples."

At the conference, students participated in extracurricular events, met with experts and shared updates about their experience and takeaways through videos and a blog series.

Engaging college students from across the country, Planet Forward is an initiative of the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs that uses storytelling, media and educational events to tell the stories of invention and innovation.

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