

# USU Extension Professionals Make Connections in the Philippines

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In order to learn more about Extension abroad and make connections with program administrators, practitioners and academics in the field, Utah State University Extension faculty members travelled to the Philippines earlier this spring to participate in the first International Extension Professional Development program.

The program is part of a recent agreement between USU and the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, with support from USU Extension and Epsilon Sigma Phi, the National Association of Extension Professionals. Participants from USU Extension, as well as Extension professionals from Colorado, Iowa and Wisconsin, learned about Extension work in the Philippines in the areas of nutrition, family and consumer sciences, youth development, agriculture and environmental sustainability.

The group discussed program priorities with national Extension leaders in Manila, attended presentations by faculty who lead local, regional and national Extension initiatives, observed a cooking demonstration of traditional Filipino food, learned about rice breeding at the International Rice Research Institute, networked with academics and students from the University of the Philippines Los Baños, and presented a symposium on Extension work in the United States and how it can connect to Extension work in the Philippines.

“Understanding more about how family units work, how people view jobs and careers and how they view aspects of their lives related to Extension work is critical,” said program participant Kelly Kopp, USU Extension professor and water conservation and turfgrass specialist. “Learning these things about the Filipino culture, or any other culture, will help me be a better Extension educator.”

This program is one of the many ways USU Extension provides professional development opportunities for faculty. Linking with other areas of the world, such as the Philippines, can help Extension faculty broaden their views on ways to address the issues of food security, agricultural research and environmental sustainability locally.

“International work is important for Extension because we learn different and sometimes better ways to deliver Extension programs,” said Justen Smith, Extension agriculture and natural resources department director and Extension professor who participated in the program. “It allows us to ‘think outside the box.’ We live in a global society, and Extension faculty participating in these experiences learn to appreciate cultural diversity and broaden their understanding of the needs of various cultures.”

For more information about USU Extension, visit <https://extension.usu.edu/>.

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