

Graduate Assistantships (2 positions) Soil health assessment for specialty crops in Washington State Washington State University, Mount Vernon, WA

Description of Research Opportunity:

Two research assistantship positions (possibility for M.S. or Ph.D.) are available with Dr. Deirdre Griffin LaHue's Soil Health & Sustainable Soil Management program at WSU's Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center (NWREC) in Mount Vernon, WA. The successful applicants will conduct soil health surveys of major specialty crops in Washington State—potatoes, onions, pulses, sweet corn, hops, wine grapes, tree fruit—with on-farm soil sampling, in-field and lab measurements of key soil health indicators, and collection and analysis of management meta-data. Students will engage directly with growers, land managers, regional Extension specialists, Conservation Districts, and other WSU faculty. This WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant-funded project will improve our understanding of the current state of soil health in Washington and will be a key part of road-mapping for the state's Soil Health Initiative.

The students will be based at the NWREC in Mount Vernon with an option to spend a semester on the main campus in Pullman, WA. The research project will entail frequent travel to the Columbia Basin and Yakima Valley of Washington.

Desired Qualifications:

Candidates with a B.S. degree (or M.S. degree for Ph.D. assistantship) or equivalent work experience in soil science, plant science, environmental science, or similar field are preferred. Strong technical writing ability and effective oral communication skills are required. Prior experience with lab and field research and an interest in Extension will be considered favorably. Students are expected to exhibit both teamwork and individual initiative within the Soil Health program.

Contact:

Please contact Dr. Deirdre Griffin LaHue by email (d.griffin@wsu.edu).

Apply:

Interested persons should apply to the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences (CSS): <http://css.wsu.edu>. The priority application deadlines are July 1st, 2019 for the Spring 2020 term and January 10th, 2020 for the Fall 2020 term, but applications will still be considered after these dates. *Preferred start date is January 2020, but this is negotiable.*

Assistantship Details: Graduate assistantships are formal half-time, academic-year appointments accompanied by a summer stipend, with an annual estimated total of \$22,572 for M.S. or \$23,754 for PhD. Graduate assistants are also provided tuition waivers, as well as comprehensive health (medical/dental) insurance, and are eligible for additional support through scholarships, fellowships and travel grant awards. Qualifying recruits may be nominated by the program director for a **prestigious ARCS fellowship**

which provides a \$17,500 annual award in addition to the research assistantship.

