

Delaware State University Project Seeks Input on DNREC Outreach

Two-Year Project Aims to Improve Public Engagement

Delaware State University (DSU) will host virtual town hall meetings next month as part of a two-year research project to determine ways the [Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control \(DNREC\)](#) can improve public outreach and community engagement.

DNREC awarded the University a \$249,773 grant earlier this year to conduct the research, which will focus on traditionally underrepresented communities. The virtual town halls will be held throughout the winter, beginning in November. The first two town halls will be held Nov. 17 and Dec. 1. Times are yet to be determined, but will be published at de.gov/dnrecmeetings.

For this research, Delaware State defines traditionally underrepresented communities as “either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another or a geographically dispersed set of individuals where either type of group experiences common conditions such as low income, high and/or persistent poverty, racial, ethnic and minority residential segregation, linguistic isolation, distressed neighborhoods and disproportionate environmental stressor burden.”

DSU will research the Department’s external communications, review feedback from stakeholders, and evaluate the needs and limitations of its current and past outreach programs to effectively reach and engage underserved communities and determine where improvements may be made.

“DNREC has a long tradition of transparency and public engagement to ensure the wise management, conservation and enhancement of the state’s natural resources,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. “But we can always do better. This partnership with the University and the resulting research will help us take our outreach efforts to the next level.”

Delaware State University President Dr. Tony Allen believes that the university will also benefit from the work. “The project will provide research assistantship and internship opportunities to undergraduate students in the University’s Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice while enhancing the outreach component of the core values of the university,” Allen said.

The goals of the research are:

- to improve DNREC’s ability to conduct effective outreach regarding regulatory actions and policy development;
- to create awareness of DNREC’s processes and initiatives to underserved communities in Delaware;
- to develop robust methods by which DNREC can provide efficient and informative community-oriented education and outreach.

The principal investigators of the grant are Dr. Raymond Tutu, professor and chairperson, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice; Dr. Anwar Ouassini, associate professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice; and Dr. Laurin Parker, associate professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state’s natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with @DelawareDNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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