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FSU Students Present at Appalachian Teaching Project Conference

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From left, Kerry Lapham, Al Feldstein, Jeremy Sidebottom, Morgan Bauer, Katie Kraus, Mary

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Frostburg State University students enrolled in "Folklore in Appalachia" shared their work as participants in the Appalachian Regional Commission's Appalachian Teaching Project at the 2011 ATP Conference held in Arlington, Va., in early December.

Under the direction of Dr. Kara Rogers Thomas, assistant professor of folklore and sociology at FSU, students developed public programming for Mountain City Traditional Arts, a Frostburg shop and entertainment venue. Students worked in teams to book artists from the Appalachian region to develop presentations and performances geared toward specific folklore genres. Students were given the primary responsibility for producing the events, including planning, production, advertising and documentation. Such programming is intended to heighten recognition for the venue, which will, in turn, translate into increased sales for artists and investment in Frostburg's Arts and Entertainment District.

The students are Kerry Lapham, Jeremy Sidebottom, Morgan Bauer, Katie Kraus, Mary Kruger, Alec Fisher, Rebecca Reed, Joseph Saucedo, Susan Snow and MaryAnna Cole.

ATP gives college students the opportunity to engage in research projects that address challenges facing Appalachian communities. Led by the Consortium of Appalachian Centers and Institutes, a coalition of 15 Appalachian-studies organizations, the program includes coursework and active research on issues related to building a sustainable future for Appalachia. Faculty and students at each participating institution design and carry out research projects tailored to the needs of targeted communities, many of which are in economically distressed counties.

Supported by ARC to help build student leadership capacity, the program teaches real-world leadership skills, taking students out of the classroom and into their communities. The research conducted helps guide communities toward local solutions that help solve significant problems in a sustainable way, and the research presentations challenge ARC to take a fresh look at issues and solutions in the Appalachian region.

ATP is administered by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. Fourteen institutions from 10 Appalachian states participated in the 2011 Appalachian Teaching Project.

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