



Tolessa Deksissa, Ph.D. is the Director of the Water Resources Research Institute in the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) at the University of the District of Columbia. He joined UDC in May 2006. Since then he has been instrumental in building excellence in environmental research and training capacity of the University. He is the Founder and current Director of innovative student centered Professional Science Master's Program in Water Resources Management; and the new nationally accredited Environmental Quality Testing (EQTL) and Modeling Laboratories. Tolessa is also the co-founder of the new UDC College, CAUSES. He is spearheading the UDC's National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) with the standard of National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC). He served as a lead researcher in CAUSES and initiated several research projects funded through USGS, USDA and NSF. He initiated and taught several graduate and undergraduate environmental sustainability and water quality courses. He mentored several graduate thesis students from UDC, George Washington University and Howard University. His research projects include water quality assessment and modeling; emerging contaminants; pesticide analysis in water, soil and food; GIS based modeling of green infrastructure; trace metal analysis in urban soils; fate and transport of organic contaminants in water; modeling integrated urban wastewater system; adaptive water resources management; and fostering significant learning in sciences. Important parts of his research findings are published in peer reviewed journals, conference proceedings and technical reports. Dr. Deksissa earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Technology and MS in Environmental Sciences, both from Ghent University, Belgium. His BS is in Arid Land Crop Sciences. Tolessa also serves as the member of PhD thesis committee; the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin advisory committee; the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Research and Outreach Collaborative Steering Committee; emerging contaminant and agriculture working group of Potomac Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership.



Sebhat Tefera is a Project Specialist at the UDC Environmental Quality Testing Lab, Water Resources Research Institute, College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES) at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC). He joined the lab in March 2013. He is focusing on analyses of chemical contaminants in water, soil and food. Sebhat was instrumental in receiving NELAP accreditation of the EQTL in water and soil testing by the ICP-MS. Prior to his affiliation with, CAUSES he was employed as Adjunct Professor of Mathematics and Sciences at the Community College of the District of Columbia for four years. Prior to the Community College, he worked with the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) formerly known as the National Food Processors Association (NFPA) in Washington, DC for more than 20 years. At the GMA, he had conducted research on different food products with the purpose of improving food quality and safety. He had also prepared protocols; lead collaborative research studies; conducted research for analysis of chemical residues in foods to address the Food Industry and FDA concerns; and have given updates on emerging chemical issues during association meetings. He had published research papers in peer-reviewed journals on perchlorate analyses in drinking and ground water contaminants, vegetables, fruits and milk by LC/MS/MS(Liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry), sodium in low sodium food products by ICP/MS(Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry), and detection of the adulteration of cereal flours with melamine and related triazine byproducts of ammeline, ammelide, and cyanuric acid by HPLC/DAD(High-Performance Liquid Chromatography with Diode-Array Detection). He teaches food sciences for the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics in the College of Agriculture, Urban

Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES). Sebhat received his MSc degree in Chemical Engineering from Warsaw University of Technology, Poland.



Yacov Assa is a program coordinator for the Environmental Quality Testing Lab, Water Resources Research Institute, CAUSES. He joined the lab in June 2014. Since then he was working on organic and organic contaminants in soil and water, including pesticide and PCBs analysis in water and fish tissue using Gas Chromatograph and Mass Spectrophotometer (GC-MS); Total Organic Carbon Analysis Using TOC and TN analyzer. Prior to joining the lab, he was working at the University of Maryland Agriculture Experiment Station in Upper Marlboro, MD. Yacov research and laboratory and field experiences include soil biogeochemistry, soil fertility management, climate change, water quality, and soil conservation. In addition to his academic and research background in agriculture, Yacov has managed a small scale organic farm that emphasized reduced farm dependence on external inputs and reliance on locally sourced materials for farm needs. Yacov is an avid gardener, and since moving to the DC area, has continued growing food in containers, community garden plots and windowsills. Yacov received his MSc degree in Soils and Biogeochemistry and BS degree in Agricultural Management and Range-land Resources with emphasis on sustainable production from the University of California, Davis. Yacov holds a Nutrient Management Consultant certificate from Maryland Department of Agriculture, and an Associate Soil Science Professional certificate from the Soil Science Society of America.