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NEWS

For Immediate Release

**Ouachita students gain research experience through
Patterson Summer Research Program**

By McKenzie Cranford

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Nineteen students from Ouachita Baptist University and two students from Hendrix College participated in the Patterson Summer Research Program on Ouachita's campus this past summer. Every year, students in the program are assigned to work with a faculty member, commit to a 10-week period to conduct their research and receive academic credit as well as a stipend.

"The hands-on research opportunity provides a setting where students are actually 'doing' science rather than only reading or listening to lectures 'about' science," explained Dr. Tim Knight, dean of the Patterson School of Natural Sciences. "For our students this research serves as the capstone of their education."

Along with conducting research, the students had the opportunity to present their research at the Central Arkansas Undergraduate Research Symposium at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences at Little Rock in July. Michael Rogers, a senior biology major from Little Rock, Ark., and Jesse Kitchens, a junior biology major from Lewisville, Ark., gave oral presentations while other students presented posters.

Sarah Rogers, a senior biology major from Camden, Ark., performed research with Dr. Tim Hayes, associate professor of chemistry, to find a better treatment method for triple negative breast cancer cells.

"I want to pursue a career in pharmacy, so I was excited at how much the research I performed related to pharmacy," Rogers said. "I also had the opportunity to meet students from UAMS who were performing research on triple negative breast cancer cells, and it was neat to compare our research."

Kelley Ballard, a senior biology major from Colleyville, Texas, worked with Dr. Lori Hensley, professor of biology and holder of the J.D. Patterson Chair of Biology, researching the effects of ajulemic acid on angiogenesis in Ewing's Sarcoma cancer cells.

"I had to learn new methods of experimentation and maintenance and also exhibit patience when the results did not quite come out as I expected," Ballard reflected. "I also gained an incredible fervor for the subject I was researching, making it so much easier to present our findings at the UAMS research symposium because I believed in what we were researching and striving toward."

The students also had the opportunity to perform an interactive science presentation for a group of children at Arkansas Children's Hospital this summer. "The kids were very involved and excited, and it was encouraging to feel like you had taught them something and made their day a little brighter!" Ballard said.

Other Ouachita students who participated in the program this summer included: Jace Bradshaw, a junior biology, chemistry and physics triple major from Arkadelphia, Ark.; Jordan Burt, a senior biology major from Texarkana, Texas; Bailey Chitwood, a senior biology major from North Little Rock, Ark.; Nathan Hall, a junior biology and chemistry double major from Jonesboro, Ark.; Hunter Heird, a senior dietetics and nutrition major from Pine Bluff, Ark.; Neelie Lee, a senior biology major from Glenwood, Ark.; Jeb Little, a senior biology major from Warren, Ark.; Trevor Meece, a junior biology and chemistry double major from

Arkadelphia, Ark.; Alex Morrison, a senior dietetics and nutrition major from Monticello, Ark.; Paige Onyuru, a senior biology and chemistry double major from Hot Springs, Ark.; Rachel Pruett, a senior biology and chemistry double major from Harrison, Ark.; Colby Smith, a senior biology major from Texarkana, Texas; Rachel Tucker, a senior biology and chemistry double major from Fordyce, Ark.; Joel Ubeda, a senior biology major from Shreveport, La.; and Tyler Williams, a senior biology major from Benton, Ark. Two students from Hendrix College, Nicholas Gill and Stephen Schrum, also participated in the program.

In addition to Knight, Hayes and Hensley, other faculty members involved in the program include: Dr. Joe Bradshaw, W.D. and Alice Burch Professor of Chemistry and Pre-medical Studies; Dr. Detri Brech, professor of dietetics; Dr. Sara Hubbard, assistant professor of chemistry; Dr. Marty Perry, Nell I. Mondy Professor of Chemistry; Dr. Nathan Reyna, associate professor of biology; and Dr. Jim Taylor, professor of biology.

“The faculty commitment to undergraduate research here is phenomenal,” Knight noted. “If the faculty had not bought into this program over a decade ago, then we would not have the outstanding program that we currently enjoy.”

Since the program was founded in 2001, more than 170 students have participated. Dr. J.D. Patterson of Searcy, Ark., originally funded the program, and additional funding for this past summer was obtained from the Arkansas Student Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF), the Arkansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) and the Arkansas Space Grant Consortium.

For more information about the Patterson School of Natural Sciences and the summer research program, contact Dr. Tim Knight at knight@obu.edu or visit www.obu.edu/natsci/summer-research-grants/.