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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita students present work at international English conference

By Lauren Snow

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For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Four students from Ouachita Baptist University recently participated in the annual International Sigma Tau Delta Conference, an elite international English honor society meeting for college students, in Albuquerque, N.M. Ouachita students participating in the conference included Aaron Hill, Megan McLaughlin, Shelby Spears and Marissa Thornberry.

“It’s a great honor for our students and our campus,” said Dr. Doug Sonheim, chair of the Department of Language and Literature. “Every year we have students accepted and it’s encouraging to see them succeed in their academics.

“The conference is a great experience where they can see another part of the world of literary activity,” Sonheim explained. “The experience is enriching to them and they bring a new level of enthusiasm back to campus for the English department.”

Megan McLaughlin, a senior English major from Allen, Texas, agreed, saying, “The event fostered my academic drive because it was a welcoming experience that encouraged learning and striving to continue after my career.”

McLaughlin presented *Scope*, Ouachita’s student-produced literary journal that compiles academic papers, stories, poems and art work by members of the Ouachita community.

“We got such a great response at the convention, we are looking forward to submitting *Scope* to journal competitions,” said McLaughlin, who serves as editor of the publication.

Marissa Thornberry, a senior English major from Mabelvale, Ark., expressed how the mission of the convention as a “celebration of love of language and literature” was evident. She said, “I valued the fact that we got to be surrounded by so many people who shared the same passion for writing. It was clear that everyone was in their niche of what ‘language’ they spoke, and we all learned from one another.”

Thornberry presented her paper, “Interpreting the In Between: Boundaries in *The Open Boat*,” in which she identified naturalist patterns in the short stories of author Stephen Crane. Her paper was presented in the “Through a Lens, Darkly” session, which illustrated ambiguity and crossing borders.

Aaron Hill, a sophomore English major from Benton, Ark., served as chair for the “Through a Lens, Darkly” session. He noted that the conference “really brought the study of English to life for me because I got to connect with other English majors from across the nation and around the globe.”

In addition to having the opportunity to polish his presentation skills, Shelby Spears, a junior English major from El Dorado, Ark., noted that the experience “really helped me get to know the other English majors from OBU who went, let me experience a new culture and see some amazing sights.” Spears presented his paper, “Shakespeare and Petrarch,” in the Gendered Shakespeare session.

For more information, contact Dr. Doug Sonheim at sonheimd@obu.edu or (870) 245-5554.