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Ouachita junior Jesse Kitchens earns third place in statewide science competition

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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita junior Jesse Kitchens earns third place in statewide science competition

By Anna Hurst

May 9, 2015

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University junior Jesse Kitchens earned third place in the biology category of the annual Arkansas Academy of Science competition. Kitchens received a \$50 cash prize with the award for his oral presentation of his research. The meeting and competition, held recently at Henderson State University, included about 180 participants from colleges and universities throughout Arkansas.

Kitchens' presentation, "Expression Analysis of an Insect Glucose Oxidase Transgene in Tobacco," delved into the fields of ecology and genetics. "My project's goal was to study the signaling pathways and defense mechanisms associated with oxidative stress in plants," explained Kitchens, a junior biology major from Lewisville, Ark. "I have always enjoyed working with plants. The idea of mixing that hobby with my love of genetics made [the research program] an opportunity I had to take."

Ouachita's J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences emphasizes undergraduate research for all of its students. It makes research opportunities readily available, allowing students to explore the subjects they are most passionate about and gain professional experience.

"Almost all of our biology/chemistry majors will do research and present their work off campus," said Dr. Nathan Reyna, associate professor of biology at OBU and Kitchens' faculty advisor. "This experience is very valuable and is recognized by graduate schools and medical schools.

"Additionally, the fact we presented off campus and our project was recognized for its quality shows the quality of our student-driven projects," he added. "Often people see undergraduate research as not real research. We have demonstrated this is far from true."

Abby Fain, a senior biology major from Camden, Ark., also attended the meeting and presented a poster in the competition. Dr. Jess Kelly, assistant professor of biology at OBU, co-hosted the event with faculty from Henderson State University.

For more information, contact Dr. Nathan Reyna at reynan@obu.edu or (870) 245-5240.

PHOTO OF KITCHENS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

AT <http://www.obu.edu/news/2015/05/09/ouachita-junior-jesse-kitchens-earns-third-place-in-statewide-science-competition>.