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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita students publish research in nationally recognized scientific journal, JoVE

By Cimber Winfrey

November 6, 2015

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University students Jace Bradshaw and AlleaBelle Gongola were recently accepted for publication in JoVE, the Journal of Visualized Experiments, for their scientific research paper, "Rapid Verification of Terminators Using the pGR-Blue Plasmid and Golden Gate Assembly."

The two-part project began after Gongola, a senior psychology major from Dardanelle, Ark., began her research in bioinformatics, a field that uses computer software to analyze DNA. Gongola first became interested in the project after taking an Intro to Bioinformatics course in the spring. Upon completing the course, she was invited by Dr. Nathan Reyna, associate professor of biology, to extend the class and conduct extra research.

"OBU professors are always willing to invest in us and give us opportunities for research experiences," Gongola noted.

Bradshaw, a junior biology, chemistry and physics major from Arkadelphia, Ark., first became interested in the project after taking classes in bioinformatics and genetics and working in synthetic biology. He took Gongola's data from bioinformatics and used it to synthesize the information into real sequences of DNA to test in cells.

"It is a really neat thing to see how we can take what AlleaBelle finds on the computer and use it to make stuff happen in the cell," Bradshaw said.

Since the summer before his freshman year, Bradshaw has had the opportunity to work on research projects at Ouachita every summer.

"Each project has built on my knowledge of research. I don't think that's an opportunity you can get at another school," Bradshaw stated. Noting that at many larger universities, "you have to wait your turn and do a lot of volunteer work before you can get into the lab to do experiments," he added, "Here I

was fortunate enough to be able to immediately take bioinformatics and go straight in and use those skills to do real research.”

“Very few undergraduates actually have a paper published, much less published while they are still in undergraduate school,” said Dr. Tim Knight, dean of the Patterson School of Natural Sciences and professor of biology. “Jace and AlleaBelle are just more in a long line of students that have contributed to the hard-working culture we enjoy in the Patterson School of Natural Sciences.”

Having accepted Bradshaw and Gongola’s submission, JoVE is currently working to translate their research paper into a video script. The publication will then send a videographer to Ouachita’s campus later this year to create a video protocol related to the techniques that Bradshaw and Gongola developed this summer. Upon filming, JoVE will edit and add professional voice-overs to the film before it is published online and indexed in PubMed/MEDLINE, SciFinder and Scopus.

Funding for the project was provided by the J.D. Patterson Summer Research Fellowship and the JoVE article was published through an Arkansas INBRE grant.

“I’m most proud of the initiative they’ve taken to pursue work beyond the classroom experience,” Knight added. “This illustrates their dedication to research and helps build their resume as well as Ouachita’s.”

For more information about OBU’s Patterson School of Natural Sciences, contact (870) 245-5238.