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NEWS

For immediate release

Ouachita students present research to state legislators at STEM Posters at the Capitol

By Katie Smith

May 9, 2017

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5802.



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—A group of 10 Ouachita Baptist University students and three faculty members participated in the annual STEM Posters at the Capitol event held recently in Little Rock. They were among 110 undergraduate students who presented at the event, which highlights undergraduate research in natural sciences and math to elected state officials.

Dr. Detri Brech, professor of dietetics, as well as Dr. Nathan Reyna and Dr. Ruth Plymale, associate professors of biology, accompanied the students, who presented seven posters to high school students, other undergraduate students and professors, the media and Arkansas government officials at the capitol in Little Rock. Fifteen colleges and universities participated in the invitation-only event, and 70 posters were presented.

Buzz Hardin, a senior biology major from Marion, Ark., and Jake Edmondson, a junior biomedical sciences major from Benton, Ark., presented together on summer research they conducted on intercellular communication with Dr. Reyna. Their research focused on “isolating and sequencing the genetic information from exosomes treated with a variety of growth factors,” Hardin said. Their poster was titled “RNA Sequence Analysis of Exosome-Treated U87 Glioma Cells.”

“The experience was different from the normal routine of going to conferences and presenting posters because of the high school students we got to present to,” Hardin added. “I think that students at the high school level having the experience of seeing how undergraduate students conduct and present this research is a good experience for them that I was happy to be a part of.”



Morgan Lynch, a sophomore biomedical sciences major from D'Hanis, Texas, (at left) and Kori Bullard, a senior biology major from Percy, Ark., (at right) presented "Investigating Neurite Differentiation and Cell Growth on Extracellular Matrices" at the recent Posters at the Capitol event in Little Rock.

Lizzy Adams, a senior biology major from Conway, Ark.; Devin Price, a senior biology major from Ruston, La.; and Lainey Weatherford, a senior biology major from Hot Springs, Ark.; presented "Influence of Nutrient Limitation and Population Density on Antibiotic Production," research completed alongside Dr. Plymale. Their research focused on bacteria resistance and how it is passed through animals.

"It was really cool to see how so many different projects overlapped, like one research project started something and another went more in depth," Adams said. "It was also great to see how state officials made an effort to be there for their young constituents."

Other Ouachita students who presented research included:

- Alex Bradley, a senior nutrition and dietetics major from Texarkana, Texas, and Laura Prince, a senior nutrition and dietetics major from Arkadelphia, Ark., presented "Analysis of Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs and Assessment of Children's BMIs, BMI-for-Age Percentiles and BMI z-scores" as well as "Assessment of Body Mass Indices of Children Participating in a Nutrition and Physical Activity Program."
- Amanda Brooks, a senior biology major from Little Elm, Texas, presented "Biodiversity in Biocubes."
- Kesley Brown, a junior biomedical sciences major from Springdale, Ark.; Kori Bullard, a senior biology major from Percy, Ark.; and Morgan Lynch, a sophomore biomedical sciences major from D'Hanis, Texas; presented "Investigating Neurite Differentiation and Cell Growth on Extracellular Matrices."

Each of these students was able to present their research on real-world problems to influential people and had opportunities to further their presenting experience.

"Every time I present my research, I enjoy it and grow in confidence of my abilities and my professionalism," Adams noted. "I also loved learning so much from the other presenters and hearing

about their research. If I ever got a chance to continue this research some day, I know I could expand more on my ideas with the help of the things I learned during Posters on the Hill.”

For more information on the Posters on the Hill event, contact Dr. Tim Knight, dean of the J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences at knight@obu.edu or (870) 245-5582.

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <https://www.obu.edu/news/2017/05/09/ouachita-students-present-research-state-legislators-stem-posters-capitol/>.