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**OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**



NEWS

For Immediate Release

**Ouachita Baptist University receives \$500,000
National Science Foundation grant for biology education**

October 3, 2018

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from the prestigious National Science Foundation to advance the incorporation of cell culture-based research into undergraduate classes. Through the creation of the Cell Biology Education Consortium, Ouachita is now leading a national effort for innovation in undergraduate biology education.

The grant capitalizes on Ouachita's strengths of high-impact learning and a tradition of incorporating research in the classroom.

The foundation for the grant was a three-year pilot program at Ouachita centered on cancer metastasis and neuron differentiation, which was funded by Arkansas Idea Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) and the Center for Advanced Surface Engineering (CASE).

"Since we started this journey three years ago, we've been able to improve and expand the modules created in the initial pilot research project," said Dr. Nathan Reyna, Associate Professor of biology at Ouachita. "This course-based research experience will transform the cell biology learning experience for our students because they will be able to take what they've learned in the classroom and directly apply it in the lab."

Ouachita has incorporated research into all phases of the undergraduate biology curriculum, allowing hundreds of students to conduct authentic research.

As part of the Cell Biology Education Consortium, students work on new techniques to use in research and develop written and video protocols for those techniques. Additionally, students have the opportunity to interact with scientists from around the world to expand their professional development experiences and create their own independent research projects.

Students are also building on class projects as independent research projects. To date, 16 students have worked in Dr. Reyna's lab and have co-authored a cancer research publication.

"The fact that students are not only doing the research but are able to publish the data in a peer-reviewed science journal shows our combination of teaching and research works," said Dr. Reyna. "This innovative, student-centered approach was recognized by the National Science Foundation and was one of the deciding factors for our funding. Students are more engaged, have ownership of their projects and are growing in their knowledge of cell biology."

The ultimate objective is to send more Ouachita students into graduate level coursework or directly into the workforce.

"The National Science Foundation award – along with the university's growing enrollment, highest retention rate ever and record level giving – provides further evidence that Ouachita is rising," said Dr. Ben Sells, president of Ouachita. "I'm grateful for the leadership of Dr. Reyna and others in securing this competitive funding for the benefit of our students."

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About Ouachita Baptist University: Ouachita Baptist University, a private liberal arts university in Arkadelphia, Ark., is in its 132nd year as a Christ-centered learning community. It is consistently ranked among the “Best National Liberal Arts Colleges” by *U.S. News & World Report*. The university has an average student/faculty ratio of 13:1. Its seven academic schools include business, Christian studies, education, fine arts, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences. Additionally, Ouachita offers more than 20 study abroad opportunities with partner institutions around the world. For more information visit www.obu.edu.