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For immediate release

Ouachita Alpha Chi chapter earns three national recognitions

By Abby Turner

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



ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Students in Ouachita Baptist University's chapter of Alpha Chi national college honor society were recognized at the organization's recent national convention with three national recognitions, including first place for Collaborative Research Project. There are about 300 Alpha Chi chapters nationwide, with membership including juniors and seniors whose GPAs rank in the top ten percent of their school.

In addition to the Collaborative Research Project first prize, Lesley Howard, a junior studio art and psychology double major from Lavon, Texas, was named one of 10 national Alfred H. Nolle Scholars; and Carrie Hill, a senior graphic design major from Benton, Ark., won first place nationally for Outstanding Visual Arts Presentation. Wesley Oliver, a senior public history and history double major from Conway, Ark., also was named the Region II Pryor Fellow for Graduate Study, and Ouachita's chapter officers were invited to present a Strengthening Session of best practices for the benefit of other chapters.

"I am so grateful for this group of hardworking students. They are willing to tackle extra tasks outside of their regular courses, and they do so with such joy and gusto," said Dr. Myra Houser, assistant professor of history and Ouachita's Alpha Chi chapter sponsor. "They conducted themselves well at the convention, and I heard many side comments from other staff and advisors about what a joy they were to watch and work with. It is such a privilege to serve as sponsor, and I look forward to beginning another chapter when we induct new members on Scholars Day."

Each Alpha Chi chapter may submit one Collaborative Research Project for competition. The project must involve a team of two to five students representing at least two different majors. Ouachita's team had five members representing seven majors among them. The projects must fit the annual theme proscribed by Alpha Chi, and they involve a year of research that culminates in a written paper, poster presentation and oral presentation at the national conference. This year's theme was "Civil Discourse, Polarizing Perspectives, and Lines of Identity," and Ouachita's project was "Art, Age and Apartheid."

Members of Ouachita's winning research team included Jessica Cook-Snelgrove, a senior biology major from Camden, Ark.; Tucker Douglass, a junior philosophy and history double major from Nash, Texas; Lesley Howard; Lauren Lovelady, a senior finance major from Hot Springs, Ark.; and Wesley Oliver.

"It is truly one of those competitions where just finishing the race is a high achievement," Houser said. "The [research] project encompasses so many skills, from working together to public speaking, writing, and primary research – often outside of a student's major field. I am so glad that this team worked so well together, and it was lovely to learn about what other schools are researching, as well.

"On a personal note, it also meant a lot to me that the team researched South African culture and politics, which are so near and dear to me and many folks on our campus," Houser added. "To add a win on top of that is just incredible."

Hill won Outstanding Visual Arts Presentation for her honors thesis, "Crafting Comics: My Journey Through the Creative Process."

"My thesis is several short comics I've created, along with a description of my process and how it has changed as I've made each comic," Hill explained. "I'm excited to receive this award, because I worked hard for it, and it shows me that people are interested in hearing how I make comics."

Each Alpha Chi chapter also may nominate two students for national scholarship and fellowships and regional fellowships.

As a national Alfred H. Noelle Scholar, Howard earned a \$2,000 scholarship. Junior Alpha Chi members are eligible for the award.

"I honestly did not expect to win anything at all and was incredibly surprised to find that I received it when attending the awards ceremony in Cleveland," Howard said.

Oliver was named the Region II Pryor Fellow as the outstanding senior among all chapters in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. He earned \$4,000 toward future graduate study in public history as he pursues a career as an archivist.

"The best thing about Alpha Chi is the fact that it is interdisciplinary," Oliver said. "It gives me the opportunity to meet and work with people who have different scholarly interests than me."

The Ouachita chapter's executive leadership team who presented a Strengthening Session includes Lovelady as president, Howard as vice president and Rebekah Biles as secretary. Biles is a senior English major from Tulsa, Okla.

For more information about Ouachita's Alpha Chi chapter, contact Dr. Myra Houser at houser@m@obu.edu or 870-245-5547.