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### **Ouachita's Dr. Nathan Reyna receives national Innovation in Education Award**

Julie Shands

Ouachita News Bureau

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For immediate release

### **Ouachita's Dr. Nathan Reyna receives national Innovation in Education Award**

*By Julia Shands*

December 15, 2021

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or 870-245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Dr. Nathan Reyna, associate professor of biology at Ouachita Baptist University, has won the first Innovation in Education Award from the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB).

The Cell Bio Virtual 2021 conference was held online Dec. 1-10. Cell Bio is a joint international annual meeting of the ASCB and the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO). Reyna spoke and was presented his award on the first day of the virtual meeting.

"I couldn't be more pleased for Nathan," said Dr. Tim Knight, dean of the J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences at Ouachita. "He is a dedicated teacher and researcher, and his efforts in securing grants have helped him, the biology department and especially our students."



*Photo 1 Dr. Nathan Reyna*

According to the ASCB website, the new Innovation in Education Award is given to recognize the career of an individual who has achieved ASCB's mission of improving education, creating professional development opportunities and improving diversity in STEM-related fields of study.

Reyna was selected for his work as principal investigator of two programs at Ouachita funded by the National Science Foundation.

From 2016-2020, Reyna was director of the AR-CURE (Course-embedded Undergraduate Research Experience) project, an initiative to help undergraduate college and university faculty create their own course-based research projects. In four years, 75 faculty from 17 states traveled to Ouachita to attend the AR-CURE workshops.

Since 2018, Reyna has led Ouachita's Cell Biology Education Consortium (CBEC), which focuses on getting undergraduates involved in cancer research. Reyna and Dr. Lori Hensley, department head and professor of biology at Jacksonville (Ala.) State University and former chair of biology at Ouachita, developed a modular-based approach to incorporating cancer research into the classroom that is currently used in more than 25 undergraduate institutions. A majority of the research modules were created and produced by Ouachita students. Reyna's research at Ouachita is centered around understanding how cancer cells control surrounding cells as cancer progresses.

In an interview with the ASCB, Reyna said, "In five years, I went from working alone on projects to working with faculty at tribal colleges, large state schools, small undergraduate institutions, community colleges and minority-serving institutions. My teaching philosophy of incorporating authentic research and undergraduates into all aspects of a project is ingrained in everything that I do. It is this combination of education and research that has allowed the CBEC to form true collaborations with so many faculty. The CBEC has grown into a national project that incorporates a diverse group of faculty and students throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico."

For more information about the Cell Biology Education Consortium at Ouachita, contact Dr. Nathan Reyna at [reynan@obu.edu](mailto:reynan@obu.edu) or at (870) 245-5240.

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**PHOTO AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT <https://obu.edu/stories/news/2021/12/Reyna-wins-first-ASCB-award.php>**