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Ouachita News Bureau

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For immediate release

Ouachita chemistry students Clower, McCoy named Arkansas Academy of Science grant recipients

By Claire Phillips

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University chemistry students Cori Clower and Aairyel McCoy, both of Little Rock, have been chosen as two of the four students statewide to receive undergraduate student research grants from the Arkansas Academy of Science (AAS). AAS funds grants of up to \$1,000 each spring to assist students with purchasing supplies for their research projects.

Both Clower and McCoy authored their own grant proposals, which were approved for funding and announced at the AAS in April 2021. Clower, a junior biomedical sciences major, and McCoy, a senior chemistry major, are conducting their respective research projects over the course of this academic year.

Clower and McCoy also will present their research findings at the annual 2022 AAS meeting, which will be held on Ouachita's campus on April 1-2.



Photo 1 Cori Clower

“Getting these grants is a huge deal,” said Dr. Sara Hubbard, associate professor of chemistry and holder of the Nell I. Mondy Chair of Chemistry at Ouachita. “Not only is it helpful to have the funds to help with research supplies, but Cori and Aiirysel are the authors of these grant proposals – it’s not something that many undergraduates get to accomplish.”

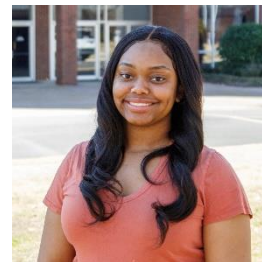


Photo 2 Aiirysel McCoy

“These grants are significant because they illustrate how motivated these two students are to have a research experience and to go through the proposal writing process,” echoed Dr. Sharon Hamilton, associate professor of chemistry at Ouachita. “Securing funding also allows us to fully explore these projects since we will be able to buy supplies specifically for these research ideas.”

Clower will use her grant award toward a joint research project with Hamilton. Their research involves experimenting with different methods to infuse drugs into wound dressing materials with hopes of identifying a technique to be used to create a more efficient healing process. The data from the research also will directly contribute to future research projects and collaborations in Hamilton’s lab courses at Ouachita.

“The goal is for the drug infusion to saturate the fiber mat evenly and allow for the release of the drugs to be steady and controlled,” Clower said. “This will allow the dressings to release the intended drug and biodegrade in the wound on its own, without having to be removed from the wound through another procedure.”

McCoy will allocate the money from her grant for a project alongside Hubbard. The purpose of their project is to discover the conditions that would cause a polycarbonate structure to become damaged while in a shipping crate; the project idea stemmed from a similar situation that occurred with a lamp in transit to the Indianapolis Museum of Art. The research will include sealing polycarbonate with other individual materials, accelerating the aging process with heat in order to determine which samples would cause similar damage to the plastic, then recreating the experiment with an actual polycarbonate lamp to ensure that no other museum encounters the same problem in the future.

For more information, contact Dr. Sharon Hamilton at hamiltons@obu.edu or (870) 245-5092. To learn more about the J.D. Patterson School of Natural Sciences, visit obu.edu/natsci.