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Bowling Green State University

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BGSU Monitor

JULY 26, 2011

B O W L I N G G R E E N S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

Top Stories

SETGO students share their original research results

After 10 weeks of intensive research activities, 40 undergraduate students from BGSU and Owens Community College presented the results of their work at the SETGO Summer Research Roundup. Joining them were several students who are working on other grant-funded studies with BGSU faculty.

Among the visitors was President Mary Ellen Mazey, who was enthusiastic about the opportunities the program provides. "Undergraduate research is so important. We're in the third year of five years of National Science Foundation funding, and we hope to institutionalize the program at the end of that time," she said.

"Being able to communicate what you do as a scientist to someone who is not a scientist is very important because most funding decisions are made by legislators, who most likely don't have science backgrounds," Dr. Laurie Fathe, Owens dean of arts and sciences, told the students.

Some of the research projects will not end with the conclusion of SETGO but will go on into the fall as the students continue their collaborations with their faculty mentors.

Decision making was the topic of several of the projects, from decisions by African cichlids about which fish against whom to demonstrate aggression, by senior Kamela Stamey, a biology major from Dayton working with Dr. Moira Van Staaden; to decisions by rats about whether to go for more variety or simply the greatest number of treats, in a study by Daniel Powers, a senior from Whitehouse majoring in neuroscience and working with Dr. Casey Cromwell (turns out quantity usually trumps variety).

A project to discover how fish orient themselves in the dark and in differing water currents has drawn the attention of researchers at the University of Maryland who are developing an unmanned underwater explorer. Senior Rohan Bhimani of Bowling Green, a neuroscience/biology major, has been working with Dr. Sheryl Coombs, biological sciences, since last year to design a flow tank for the study and begin the research.

Some of the projects have potential application for serious health issues. Ramadeep Singh Bola, a sophomore from Findlay majoring in biology, is studying with Dr. Roudabeh Jamasbi to find a way to detect cancerous cells in the esophagus.

"This has been a great learning experience. It's my first time doing something as a real research program and it sets up a great base for me. It's doing research on your own but also first doing all the background work and study you need. We reached part of our goals and saw some results," Bola said.

This summer's program included some younger participants than in past years, based on third-year recommendations from the National Science Foundation, which funds the program. SETGO is designed to increase the number of science, math, engineering and technology graduates. In addition to the summer research program, it comprises a bridge program at Owens between high school and college, and participation in the Art of Science Community, which meets regularly throughout the year.