

Undergraduates show off their research at the capitol

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/577/undergraduates-show-off-their-research-at-the-capitol/>

Thick mats of green algae, seed dispersal by rodents and the largest star-forming field in the Milky Way will be among the research topics highlighted by University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students at the Fifth Annual UW System Undergraduate Research Day March 5 in Madison.

The Posters in the Rotunda event at the state capitol, held in conjunction with UW Spirit Day, will include displays by UW Oshkosh undergraduates David Flagel, Anthony Kuchera, Matt Rubin, Micah Scorcio and Amy Vandenheuvel. Advisers attending the event will be Gregory Adler and Greg Kleinheinz, both faculty members in the biology/microbiology department.

Flagel worked with Adler on his study that considered how seed predation and dispersal by rodents influence forest regeneration in Panama. The research currently is being reviewed by the "Journal of Tropical Ecology."

"The object of the research was to look at seed dispersal, as it is an important component of how tropical rainforests reestablish themselves after being disturbed," he said.

Although he has conducted research before, Flagel's experience in Panama gave him a greater sense of confidence in doing independent research.

"When doing ecological studies, it is very common that your research takes you places far away from home for several months or even years at a time," he said. "It was an educating experience in learning how to survive in daily life in a foreign country and environment."

Flagel said he learned to expect the unexpected.

"It is important to be able to adapt to situations as they arise, and in Panama this was no exception," he said. "There were many times that new problems would come about, and I would have to discern for myself how to right them or communicate with others, including my adviser, for help."

Students have much to gain from taking part in research as undergraduates, Adler said.

"It allows them to observe first-hand phenomena that we might discuss in class, augmenting the learning process," he said. "It gives them a sense of the scientific method and how experiments are conducted, it can increase their competitive standing when applying for post-graduate studies, and it can increase their marketability in the job market by having conducted research."

The other UW Oshkosh student posters will feature:

- Kuchera, with faculty adviser, Nadejda Kaltcheva, physics and astronomy, "On the Distances of

the Young Open Clusters NGC 2244 and NGC 2264.”

- Rubin, with Lisa Dorn, biology/microbiology, “Microarray Analysis of Gene Expression Changes Across Environments.”
- Scorcio, with Nadejda Kaltcheva, physics and astronomy, “A Precision Photometry Investigation of the Carina Spiral Feature.”
- Vandenheuvel, with Kleinheinz, biology/microbiology, “Spatial Distribution of E.coli at beaches containing stable mats of Cladophora and reuse options for Cladophora solids.”