

6th Annual WV-INBRE Summer Research Symposium

Christopher Racine, a college student from Davis & Elkins College, had worked hard for nine weeks on a research project examining how a weed killer called propanil could damage the kidney. Now after all his work was completed and analyzed, he was ready to present his research results to fellow students and faculty from around the State at the West Virginia IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (WV-INBRE) 6th Annual Summer Research Symposium. This year the Symposium was held on August 2 at Marshall University. "I was a little nervous about presenting my work, but it was a great experience", Racine said.

The Summer Research Symposium of WV-INBRE is funded through a \$16 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to Marshall University (MU) and shared with West Virginia University (WVU). This program allows Marshall University and West Virginia University to help the primarily undergraduate colleges and universities throughout the state strengthen their research efforts. A portion of the award provides for a nine week summer biomedical research experience at MU or WVU for undergraduate students and faculty from the primarily undergraduate institutions around West Virginia. This year 28 undergraduate students and three faculty members participated in the summer program. Ten students and one faculty member conducted their summer research at MU and the remainder completed their projects at WVU.

"The Summer Research Program is a wonderful experience for students and faculty and gives them a chance to conduct cutting edge biomedical research," said Dr. Gary Rankin, Chair of the Department of Pharmacology, Physiology & Toxicology at Marshall University and the leader of the WV-INBRE program. "The Summer Symposium allows the students the chance to showcase their research findings as well as interact with students and faculty from most of West Virginia's colleges and universities". This year more than 130 student and faculty researchers attended the event, which took place in the Don Morris Room of Marshall's Memorial Student Center. Dr. Elsa Mangiarua of Marshall's Department of Pharmacology, Physiology & Toxicology coordinated the event.

Dr. Sidney A. McNairy Jr., Associate Director of the National Center for Research Resources and Director of the Division of Research Infrastructure of the National Institutes of Health presented a keynote talk titled "What it takes to succeed in the biomedical sciences." Dr. McNairy encouraged the students and faculty to work hard and to set high goals for their future. He inspired the students to consider a career in biomedical sciences because "You are the future of America's health discoveries!", McNairy said.

Students and faculty participating in the Summer Research Program and in the symposium came from Bethany College, Concord University, Davis & Elkins College, University of Charleston, West Virginia State University, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Alderson--Broaddus College, Bluefield State College, Fairmont State University, Glenville State College, Shepherd University, West Liberty State College, and Wheeling Jesuit University. This year's symposium featured 58 presentations from students and faculty from these institutions. Seven of these researchers gave oral presentations of their work. Many different areas of biomedical research were covered in the poster and oral presentations. Some of the topics

discussed included cancer treatment, obesity-associated hypertension, sleep and memory, diabetes, and toxicology.

The symposium represents something important for all of West Virginia, according to Mangiarua, “It contributes to establishing a network of faculty and students, to enhancing research throughout the state, and to developing a pipeline of outstanding students who are interested in entering the state’s graduate programs in biomedical research”.

As for Racine, he is headed back to Davis & Elkins College and getting ready to apply for dental school. But, after this summer, conducting research is also part of his plans.