

SWOSU Biology Students and Tri Beta Win Awards at Regional Convention

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SWOSU's Tri Beta Chapter won several awards at the recent South Central Regional Convention. Among those attending were (front from left): Mason Howe, Okeene; Timothy Stein, Enid; Matt Abbott, Anadarko; and Nile McCullough, Edmond. Back from Left—Lyly Van, Broken Arrow; Ashley Powers, Duncan; Jake Gregston, Duncan; Mandi Foutch, Seiling; Allison Statton, Oklahoma City; Liz Jansing, Waco (TX); and SWOSU faculty member Dr. Andrea Holgado.

Five Southwestern Oklahoma State University biology students recently won regional honors at the 2015 Beta Beta Beta (National Biological Honor Society) South Central Regional Convention held at the University of Oklahoma Biological Station at Lake Texhoma.

Eighteen universities from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas sent students to the annual convention.

SWOSU's Matt Abbott of Anadarko won first place and the Brooks Award for Outstanding Oral Presentation; Nile McCullough of Edmond and Ashley Powers of Duncan won first place and Johnson Award for Outstanding Poster Presentation; Elizabeth Jansing of Waco (TX) won third place in the Outstanding Poster Presentation; and Jake Gregston of Duncan won third place for Outstanding Poster Presentation.

For winning first place, Abbott, McCullough and Powers won travel money to the national convention.

The presentations were:

- Abbott's presentation was "Brain Cells Require a Recycling Machinery for Normal Functioning." His mentor for the work was Dr. Andrea Holgado.
- Powers' presentation was "Autophagy Plays an Essential Role in Neuronal Development and Maintenance." Her mentor for this work was Dr. Andrea Holgado. Powers was also elected secretary for the 2016 South Central Regional Convention.
- McCullough's presentation was "A Pilot Study: Menthol's Implication on Nicotine Addiction in Adolescence: A Rat Model to Examine Effects on Reward and the Brain." McCullough's research was conducted at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and his research mentor was Dr. Jean King from the Center for Comparative NeuroImaging.
- Jansing's presentation was "Lanthionine Ketamine is a Neurotrophic Agent that Promotes Axonal Elongation and Autophagy." Her mentor was Dr. Andrea Holgado.
- Gregston's presentation was "Determining the Toxic Effects of Silver Nanoparticles using *C. elegans*." His mentor was Dr. Andrea Holgado.

Other SWOSU students in attendance were Allison Statton of Oklahoma City, Mandi Foutch of Seiling, Mason Howe of Okeene, Lyly Van of Broken Arrow and Timothy Stein of Enid.

SWOSU's Delta Sigma chapter was also awarded second place in the "Outstanding Chapter for District 1" competition and third place in the scrapbook competition. The SWOSU chapter was also awarded Runner-up Bertholf Award. The Bertholf is given to the top chapter in the nation, and there are currently 670 Tri Beta chapters throughout the United States. Sue Ball, completing her 20th year as sponsor, compiled all information about the chapter's activities and submitted it to the national office for evaluation.

The SWOSU chapter was founded in 1952 and is dedicated to improving the understanding and appreciation of biological studies. Research at the convention was funded by the National Science Foundation, Oklahoma INBRE, the SWOSU College of Arts and Sciences, SWOSU student allocation funds and the SWOSU Department of Biological Sciences.