

# Clinton Student at SWOSU Presents at Two National Conferences

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University biology major Jesse Velasco of Clinton recently presented results from his summer research internship at two national conferences held in California and Florida.

Velasco, who performed summer research at the University of Oklahoma Health Science Center as part of the OK-INBRE program, presented at the 2016 SACNAS National Conference in Long Beach (CA) in October and the annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) in Tampa (FL) in November.

During his summer internship, Velasco worked under the mentorship of Dr. Nawajes Mandal, assistant professor at the Department of Ophthalmology. His main research project focuses on the study of lipids and their roles in preventing retinal deterioration and blindness. Through this investigation, Velasco and other members of the research team, intended to gain a deeper understanding of the molecules mediating vision and substances triggering retinal degenerative disorders, such as age-related macular degeneration.

SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) and ABRCMS are inclusive organizations dedicated to fostering the success of underrepresented minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and promoting their advancements in careers and positions of leadership.

The participation at these two meetings was possible by the combined financial support of OK-INBRE and OK-LSAMP.