



July 25, 2017

UW-Platteville students earn top finishes in Quick Pitch Finals

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. – Two University of Wisconsin-Platteville students received top finishes at WiSys’ Wisconsin Science and Technology Symposium Quick Pitch State Final on Tuesday, July 25. Out of five finalists, Leah Statz, a senior majoring in animal science from Sauk City, Wisconsin, was named the WiSys Quick Pitch state champion, and Elista Fisher, a recent biology graduate from Port Byron, Illinois, received second place.

The WiSys Technology Foundation’s Quick Pitch competition gives students a chance to showcase their creative and entrepreneurial spirit by presenting their research findings and innovative ideas through a three-minute pitch to a panel of judges. Students who placed in the on-campus competitions this spring at UW-Platteville, UW-Green Bay, UW-Oshkosh and UW-Eau Claire were invited to the state final held July 24. Winners were announced the following day.

“This is the first time that this competition has been held at a state level, so being named the champion is pretty cool,” Statz said.

Statz, who is entering her final semester at UW-Platteville, focused her research on the analysis of particle size and organic matter in recycled sand bedding, specifically used in farm stalls. Since there is not an established universal sand bedding, Statz fixated her research on finding the ideal sand coarseness, quality and particle size. After graduating, she plans to attend UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine with the final goal of being a large animal veterinarian.

Fisher, a spring 2017 graduate, researched cyano-bacteria, a nuisance blue-green algae that is commonly found in Wisconsin lakes. Previous studies

indicated that hydrogen peroxide can naturally control the algae without emitting harmful chemicals. However, since little is known about how other organisms are affected, Fisher focused her research on the effects of hydrogen peroxide on beneficial freshwater organisms. She is continuing her education by pursuing a master's degree in aquatic sciences at UW-La Crosse.

"It was interesting to learn what other students are doing and how their work relates back to my own research," Fisher said about the competition.

Statz received an award of \$500, and Fisher earned an award of \$250.

In addition to the successful showing at the Quick Pitch competition, two UW-Platteville students finished third out of 50 entries in the event's Poster Symposium. With the help of mentor Dr. Mohammad Rabbani, Bailey Rockwood and Madeline Zilles showcased their research on the synthesis of a sulfur functionalized monomer for preparation of functionalized porous organic polymers.

About WSTS

The Wisconsin Science and Technology Symposium began in 2007 as a way to encourage interdisciplinary research among scientists across the state. What began as a small gathering focused almost entirely on research presentations surrounding the "hard sciences" of biotechnology, nanotechnology, medical science and clean energy quickly grew into Wisconsin's signature networking opportunity for researchers, students, alumni and industry professionals. Adjustments to programming each year have helped make WSTS grow to more than 200 registrants, allowing for more meaningful and interdisciplinary collaborations.

About WiSys Technology Foundation

WiSys Technology Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) supporting organization of the University of Wisconsin System. WiSys supports 11 four-year universities, 13 freshman-sophomore UW College campuses and statewide UW-Extension to

identify innovative technologies and bring them to the marketplace.

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