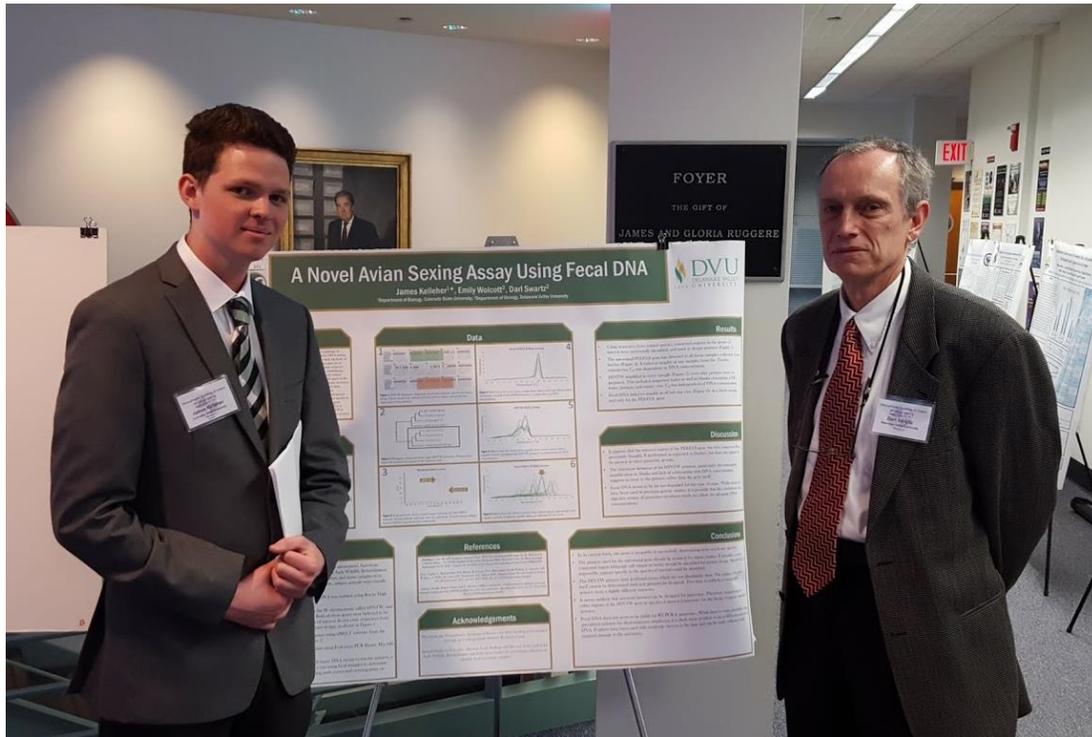


Pennsylvania Academy of Science 2017 Meeting



In April, I had the opportunity to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Science’s annual meeting in Wilkes-Barre and present the findings of research which I had been involved in at Delaware Valley University. This represented the conclusion of nearly a year’s work collaborating with Dr. Darl Swartz on a project entitled “A Novel Assay for Avian Sexing using Fecal DNA,” which was derived from a similar endeavor I undertook with the same professor during high school. Following my freshman year at CSU, I reconnected with Dr. Swartz and we decided to pursue funding to continue our prior work. Following a successful grant proposal to the Pennsylvania Academy of Science, we began collecting data and running experiments in May 2016. After working through the summer and over winter break we managed to find some success, and began to put together our findings and develop a poster to compete at the PAS meeting in spring.

The meeting would end up being a three-day event at King's College, a small institution in North-Eastern Pennsylvania. The primary focus of the conference was a series of over 100 presentations by undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers on a wide range of topics across the sciences, distributed between three poster fairs and eight sets of oral presentations. I had the opportunity to attend a significant amount of these, which exposed to me to several fascinating areas of study, many of which were specific to my home state of Pennsylvania.

My opportunity to present came during a poster session during the second day of the meeting. I stood by my poster for two hours and spoke to at least a dozen people, meeting several scientists working in similar disciplines and working on similar projects. I learned quite a bit speaking with these people and picked up some advice which I can likely apply to my own work in the future. In terms of the competition itself I was very pleased with my performance, placing 5th out of 117 students and gaining valuable presentation experience.

The most memorable part of the conference came on the second night when all attendees were addressed by the keystone speaker, Dr. Peter Dodson. Dodson is a paleontologist from University of Pennsylvania, widely considered a leading authority on dinosaurs, and has himself discovered several new species. He spoke at length on his life as a scientist and his experiences working in four continents while searching for fossils. It was a phenomenal talk which came with numerous valuable insights about a life in the sciences and academia.

All in all, this was an incredible event which came as my first scientific conference. The experiences presenting my own work and observing that of others came with substantial value which I know that I will carry with me as I advance in my academic career and beyond. I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to attend with the assistance of the CSU Honors Program, and hope to participate in many similar conferences in the future.