

Newsroom

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Institute for Coastal Plain Science Awards Summer Graduate Student Research Assistantships

APRIL 15, 2016



2016 Assistantship Winners: Lauren Neel & Matthew Scanlon

The James H. Oliver, Jr. Institute for Coastal Plain Science (ICPS) at Georgia Southern University has awarded Lauren Neel and Matthew Scanlon the 2016 ICPS Summer Graduate Student Research Assistantships after careful review of all submissions by a committee of ICPS faculty. Each student will receive a summer research stipend of \$4,000 to further their graduate studies.

Neel, a M.S. student in the Department of Biology, is examining thermal sensitivity and thermal tolerance in populations of the Florida scrub lizard (*Sceloporus woodi*) that occupy both long-leaf pine and scrub forest habitats. Fragmentation of habitat poses a major threat to this species in the southeastern Coastal Plain and results from Neel's study will be used to predict how the Florida scrub lizard may fare in a globally changing climate.

Scanlon, also an M.S. student in the Department of Biology, is investigating interactions between shrimp fishermen and sharks and sawfish along the Georgia coast. Specifically, Scanlon will accompany shrimpers to document how often shrimp nets get damaged and which fish species are causing damage. He will also develop and test a cost-effective electromagnetic deterrent system that will reduce damage to shrimp nets by repelling sharks and sawfish.

The ICPS furthers the College of Science and Mathematics' mission of transforming scientific knowledge into opportunities for economic development which are protective of earth's natural resources by promoting, in coordination with public and private partnerships, interdisciplinary research and education directed toward understanding the physical and biological resources occurring below the fall line and their sustainable use and management, and by enhancing curation of the extensive natural history collections and promoting their use as research and educational tools.

For the purposes of this competition, all applicants were asked to show how their research will lead to a better understanding of the physical or biological resources occurring below the fall line, and to demonstrate clearly how their project is interdisciplinary.

Martha Abell, Ph.D., wins award from the Mathematical Association of America (MAA)

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Martha Abell, Ph.D., dean of the College of Science and Mathematics, won the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Southeastern Section Distinguished Service Award at the section meeting, held at the University of Alabama – Birmingham on March 24-25.

"It's an honor to be recognized by my colleagues from around the southeast, especially for something I've enjoyed doing," said Abell. "I'm fortunate to be associated with one of the best organizations in the country, one that inspired me to become a better faculty member in terms of my teaching, scholarship and service. I was lucky to have outstanding mentors in the Southeastern Section who set the bar high and encouraged the next generations to make a difference in the lives of our students and colleagues. I'm looking forward to many more years in the Southeastern Section of the MAA, and I hope that I can continue to contribute to its success as an organization!"