



MONROE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MCCC GRAD PARTICIPATING IN SUMMER
RESEARCH PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

One of 9 Participants Selected Out of 170

MONROE, Mich. – A member of Monroe County Community College's 2014 graduating class is participating in the University of Georgia-Athens Department of Microbiology's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program in the area of prokaryotic biology.

Jenna Olson was one of 9 selected for the program out of more than 170 applicants nationwide and the only participant out of a two-year college.

The program is funded by the National Science Foundation and allows students to conduct supervised, independent research projects using state-of-the-art technology and methodology. Participants are able to take advantage of the excellent research and recreational facilities at UGA.

The program covers a wide variety of research topics that address the diverse functions of bacteria and archaea. State-of-the art techniques are used in interdisciplinary approaches that combine knowledge from the fields of genetics, genomics, biochemistry, physiology, molecular biology, cellular biology, ecology and computer science.

(more)

Press Release

Dr. Maris Fonseca, associate professor of biology at MCCC, encouraged Olson to apply for the research program.

“Jenna is an excellent student who is focused, organized and hardworking,” said Fonseca. “This is a great opportunity for her to learn as much as she can, and to utilize cutting-edge technology and interact with faculty at an institution with a great reputation in the field of microbiology.”

While attending MCCC, Olson gained experience by working in several student positions.

At the urging of Tracy Rayl, assistant professor of biology, she became a supplemental instruction leader and later served as biology laboratory assistant.

Olson said that the MCCC faculty has been very supportive of her academic career, and she credits the resources available to her at the college as catalysts for her success.

She has not always been interested in microbiology – in fact, she was not very fond of science when she first enrolled at MCCC. After temporarily selecting psychology as a major, Olson enrolled in Rayl’s introductory biology course to fulfill a degree requirement and was immediately hooked.

Olson went on to complete much of her laboratory science curriculum towards her bachelor’s degree while at MCCC which included courses in general microbiology, zoology, general chemistry and physics.

(more)

Press Release

Olson began the intensive, 9-week program in late May. She is currently doing research in the laboratory of Dr. Diana Downs. She has been accepted to the University of Michigan-Dearborn, where she will continue to study microbiology in the fall.

She plans on going on to graduate studies after completing her four-year degree and hopes to someday work for the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

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