Student Research Conference Preview

VFTH

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Nearly two hundred research projects will be presented Saturday at WKU’s 52nd annual Student Research Conference.

Among the topics, how sleep apnea affects the immune system and how a family of beetles could help us learn more about climate change.

Amy Bingham has more in this week’s View from the Hill.

“I wasn’t excited about the mice part at first”

But that didn’t stop Gatton senior Kimberly Turner from researching what these mice can teach us about sleep apnea.

“Having that dysregulation of the sleep can cause so many different issues.”

For the past year, Turner has been conducting the research in Dr. Noah Ashley’s lab.

 “She’s basically tackling this issue of how stress impacts the way a mouse responds to sleep fragmentation.”

 “I think this is a really good basis of a problem to focus on that can have so many chain reactions and help so many and help people in so many different ways.”

The research analyzes how different factors affected the inflammation and hormone levels in the mice.

 “It’s really rewarding to see the results and understand what they mean.”

 “There could be some therapeutic interventions that could help alleviate problems that arise from obstructive sleep apnea.”

“They have kind of their head tucked under their body and their antennas kind of look like a second pair of limbs so when they walk around it looks like they have eight legs like a spider.”

This understudied family of beetles is the focus of Grad student Robert Chambliss’s research.

“I sequenced a few kind of to look at their genomes and see how they’re related. So what that can help with is how these species are going to react in the future to future climate change.”

Mentored by Professor Keith Phillips, Chambliss spent last summer out west surveying the different species.

“Collected all over basically from the border of Mexico all the way to Wyoming and from Texas to California.”

 “Dr. Phillips has been incredibly helpful. He’s perhaps the premiere spider beetle expert in the world.”

Turner and Chambliss’s research will be among close to 200 projects presented this weekend.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

The Student Research Conference will be held this Saturday at Downing Student Union.

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