

Student Affiliate Program ... Growing Partners with the Water Center

by Emily E. Horton, Communications Student Worker; and Leslie Elmore, Water Center Program Coordinator



Janayah Murray introduces student researchers at the Winter 2016 meeting of the Water Research Advisory Board. (photo by Adrian Saenz, Water Center Staff member)

During the 2016-2017 school year, several students participated in a new program offered by the Oklahoma Water Resources Center: the Student Affiliate Program.

Staff applicants were required to participate in at least one Water Center activity involving students during the school year. Some options included water conservation demonstrations, research seminars, the Governor's Water Conference and Research Symposium, the Student Water Conference, or a Water Research Advisory Board meeting.

Communications majors were encouraged to expand their portfolio through writing articles or posting on social media or photographing during one of these events.

Regardless of major, the Student Affiliate Program was intended to build students' resumes and broadened their work and educational experience. These students used their specific areas of interest and talents to promote the events and activities of the Water Center and involved faculty. By completing a project for the Water Center, these students became student affiliates or "Staff" members.

Janayah Murray, an OSU sophomore studying environmental sciences with an emphasis in water resources chose to introduce and moderate student presenters at the December 2016 meeting of the Water Research Advisory Board, which includes representatives of state and federal agencies, tribes, and non-governmental organizations.

“The people in the Water Center administration made the whole process easy. They weren’t looking to intimidate or trick people into volunteering; they really wanted interested individuals to help out, and were sincere in their appreciations,” said Murray.

Murray found it not only a great networking opportunity, but also an occasion to gain more public speaking experience. As Murray explained, each of these connections was beneficial for someone like her, interested in pursuing a water-related career in Oklahoma.

The environmental science major was also excited to have the opportunity to view current research in the hydrological/agricultural field.

“I wanted to increase my socializing skills within the hydrological/agricultural field. I’m also considering research as a future goal, so essentially this program helped me ‘get my feet wet’,” said Murray.

Through the Student Affiliate Program, Murray was invited to join the CASNR Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) group on campus. The MANNRS group is a national society that promotes networking and professional development for minorities. The society provides opportunities for both professionals and students. For students like Murray, the society offers the opportunity to improve leadership, organizational, and public speaking skills.

The Oklahoma Water Resources Center was proud to sponsor a program benefitting both the Center and the students involved.