

This years Mississippi Academy of Sciences (MAS) Annual conference presented a new challenge for me as a researcher. I decided to give an oral presentation of my research now that my project has generated enough data. This set up a new series of obligations with regards to deadlines for my presentation and implementing a different approach to how I present my data. My abstract was also chosen to be a part of the Millsap's Undergraduate Special Symposium. From all of the abstracts submitted, the top 46 undergraduate abstracts from all Divisions were selected to present a poster in a special judging session. I therefore had to prepare not only a 12-minute oral presentation but also a poster of my abstract (see attached file). The first day of MAS I presented my data in the second morning session. I was also able to listen to most of the other oral presentations made in the Cellular, Molecular and Developmental biology division from both students and faculty. Once the posters were set up for display I took the time before our judging session to walk around and see what kind of research other students around the state were undertaking and looked for scientific methods that may be of use in future projects. There was a keynote speaker that night that discussed computers, AI, and the impact on the future of our state. This proved to be very interesting as he addressed the real-world impact on jobs and areas outside the normal computer science fields. The final event of the night was the two-hour judging session for all poster presentations. I had the pleasure of presenting my data to not just my judges, but several interested faculty and graduate students who research projects related to mine. The final day had morning oral presentations from mainly faculty that I was able to attend. We had a lunch and second keynote speaker on how to prepare and be better students. He presented some good ideas on both time management and self-care for busy students. There was a final 45 minute second poster session before awards were presented. I was honored to be given 1st place as the best undergraduate abstract at MAS this year's Special Symposium (see link at end). The experience as a whole provided me with a much stronger understanding of why and how to present my data in the form of an oral presentation. As oral presentations are primarily how I will be presenting my data as a PhD student and as a postdoc, gaining this experience now will better prepare me to be a stronger research scientist in the future.

Link for Winners:

<http://msacad.org/meeting-thanks/2018-mississippi-academy-of-sciences-award-winners>

Link for Abstracts:

http://msacad.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Vol-63_Jan_1_Journal-of-MAS_abstract_Issue-feb-9.pdf