



# QUEST 2018: Wearing Mentor and Mentee Shoes at the Same Time

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**NOA-AGEP**  
Northern Ohio AGEP Alliance

**Youngstown**  
STATE UNIVERSITY



## Abstract:

On April 3rd, 2018, the 30+ AGEP Scholars under the Northern Ohio Alliance came to YSU to participate in its annual spring research conference known as QUEST. As a predominately undergraduate institution, the YSU event represented an opportunity for the Scholars to do some mentoring as well as being mentored. In the morning, they had their own poster session, where visiting NOA-AGEP faculty and YSU faculty could review and comment on their doctoral research. At lunchtime, they sat with URM high school students from the surrounding area and listened to and advised on their college aspirations. In the afternoon, the Scholars became poster judges themselves, interviewing undergraduate researchers and submitting score sheets that helped decide on cash awards. Thus the event caused the Scholars to wear a variety of "shoes," with the intent of having them realize: 1) they were on a STEM career journey; 2) they had already covered a fair number of miles; and 3) they could already start giving back to those who were about to start.

## Introduction:

NOA-AGEP was begun in 2016 with the intent to develop, implement, and study a model to improve URM student participation, preparation and success in STEM graduate education, and to prepare them for entry into the professoriate. This effort included a number of signature activities, including Bridge Program, Academic Coaching, Mentoring Circles, Opportunity Networks, and Research Symposia. As for the research symposia, they were held annually in the spring. While originally the plan was to have every school participating in the alliance to take a turn hosting a research symposium, it was quickly realized that once a year was going to be sufficient in light of the other activities. Nevertheless, several schools were needed to host the research symposia, and in spring of 2018, it was YSU's turn.

## Participating Schools in NOA-AGEP:

**BGSU**  
Bowling Green State University

**CASE WESTERN RESERVE**  
UNIVERSITY EST. 1826



**KENT STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

**The University**  
of Akron

**UT** THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TOLEDO 1872

**Youngstown**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

## Announcement for QUEST 2018:

**Present your scholarship at QUEST 2018**  
Tuesday, April 3, 2018  
Kilcawley Center, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

QUEST is a University sponsored forum for undergraduate and graduate students to present their scholarship to the University community.

QUEST provides opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students to:

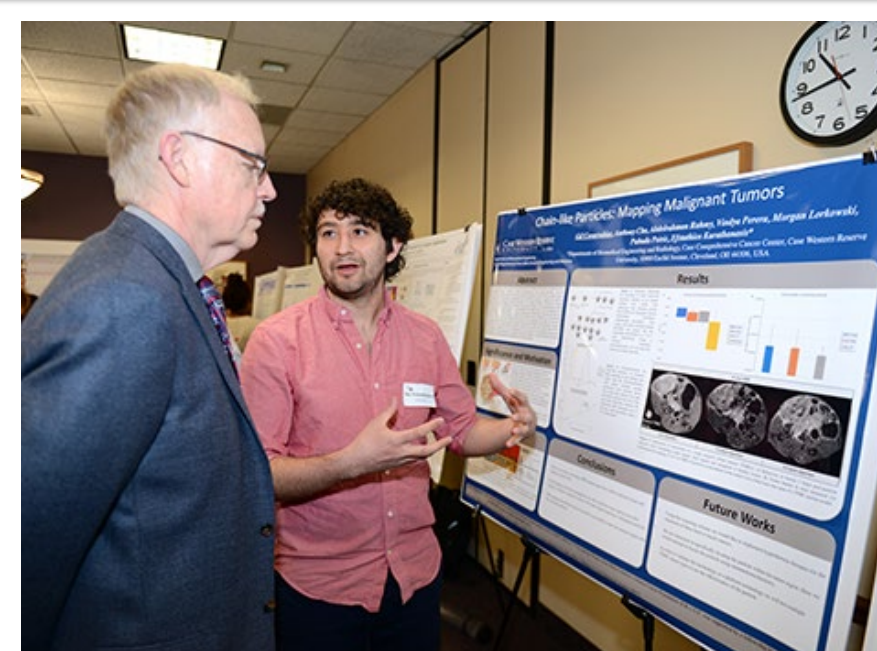
- Present their scholarship to the University community;
- Share their achievements and creations;
- Hone their presentation skills; and
- Receive University recognition for their accomplishments.

QUEST welcomes scholarship in *all forms* – scientific findings, musical scores, engineering designs and analyses, panel discussions, poetry readings, dance performances, honors and senior theses, study abroad experiences, and more.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- All currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students with completed or in-progress research, scholarly work, and creative activity are eligible.
- No registration fee.
- All presentations will be judged for scholarship awards.
- Student and faculty collaborators will be honored at the QUEST luncheon, at noon in the Chestnut Room.

## Morning AGEP poster session:



It was decided that while those AGEP Scholars whose research had progressed enough should present a poster, it was not a good idea to have them come in and compete against the largely undergraduate poster submissions. Instead, there was an AGEP-only presenter session in the morning, where NOA-AGEP P.I.'s, YSU faculty and students, and their fellow Scholars could view and comment on their work.

## Luncheon speaker: Dr. Donna Nelson

- Organic chemistry professor at University of Oklahoma
- Former president of the American Chemical Society
- Technical advisor for the television series "Breaking Bad"
- Creek Native American Indian ethnicity
- Active in SACNAS and other URM support groups



## Poster judging form:

In the afternoon, the Scholars were paired with a YSU faculty member and given a list of undergraduate posters to evaluate. The judging form is shown here on the right. The Scholars were expected to assign scores for a number of criteria: 1) was the poster organized in a logical manner; 2) did the author present him- or herself in a professional manner, both in terms of appearance and speech; 3) were graphics employed effectively to get the point across; 4) did the speaker appear to be knowledgeable in the subject area; 5) did the author(s) clearly delineate what they were trying to accomplish; 6) was a sound methodology employed to address the original hypothesis; 7) could the authors describe where their work stood in the surrounding literature on that topic; and 8) overall impression. Some attempt was made to have the AGEP Scholars judge posters in subject areas corresponding to their expertise (Biology, Chemistry, Engineering), but the distribution of presenters among the subject areas did not always permit this. Even so, that was considered to be of value, as the Scholars could apply their own sense of sound scientific method to the poster to arrive at a score. Dr. Cripe (one of the co-authors above) went over the form with the Scholars in the morning to make sure they understood what expected. The Scholars understood that their scores were going to determine which presenters would be given prize money in the 100's of dollars range, so they took their task seriously.

Project ID#:	«Serial»	Judge:	«Judge6»
Session, Time & Room:	Session «Session», «Time», «Room»		
Authors:	«Student1_Name», «Student2_Name», «Student3_Name», «Student4_Name», «Student5_Name», «Student6_Name», «Student7_Name»	Presentation:	«PresFormat»
Please score each of the criteria using the numbering system:			
1 = Poor    2 = Fair    3 = Good    4 = Very Good    5 = Excellent			
<b>Aesthetics</b>			
1. Organization of Ideas: Information was presented in a logical sequence that was clear and focused so that a broad audience followed it easily. Comments:			
2. Oral Communication and Expression: The authors made efficient use of their time constraints, used a clear speaking voice, defined terms and constructs (with little technical jargon), made the information accessible to a wide audience (i.e. that may not be expert in the area), and conformed to standards of dress, decorum, and language appropriate for a professional conference. Comments:			
3. Visual Presentation: The authors used visual aids/graphics to communicate information effectively; the information was presented in a format and design that was well-organized and easy to follow; the text and graphics were easy to read without clutter, unnecessary detail, and visual distractions. Comments:			
<b>Content</b>			
4. Knowledge of Topic: The authors demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the topic background and literature; the authors provided citations and sources for information and claims; the authors provided effective and detailed responses to questions and comments. Comments:			
5. Purpose: The authors identified clear goals, hypotheses, or objectives for the project based upon a well-justified, scholarship-based rationale. Comments:			
6. Methodology and Execution: The authors used a sound methodological plan or analysis appropriate to the subject or discipline. Comments:			
7. Scholarly Importance of the Project: This project made a novel contribution to the literature or advanced the knowledge-base of the discipline; this project was worthwhile, well-conceived, and soundly executed. Comments:			
8. Overall Evaluation: In considering the project as a whole, what is your global evaluation of the project and authors? How strongly do you feel this project should be considered for an award? Comments:			
TOTAL SCORE (40 maximum)			

## Conclusion:

By late afternoon, everyone was pretty tired, especially since some of the Scholars had gotten up early and driven several hours to reach Youngstown (hotel accommodations had been made available for those who wanted to arrive the night before). The consensus was that everything ran reasonably smoothly. A couple Scholars confessed to being a little trepidatious at the prospect of judging posters whose subject matter was not at all familiar, but the pairing with a faculty member proved valuable in alleviating any anxiety in that regard. Only about half of the Scholars actually presented posters, as many of them had only been recruited in the previous fall semester (2017), so they were not ready to make a presentation. Even so, it appeared that they quite enjoyed seeing what the 2016 recruits were doing, as well as mentoring URM high school students at lunch and judging undergrad posters. It hopefully did a lot for their confidence and self-esteem and instilled additional rigor into their own research.

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