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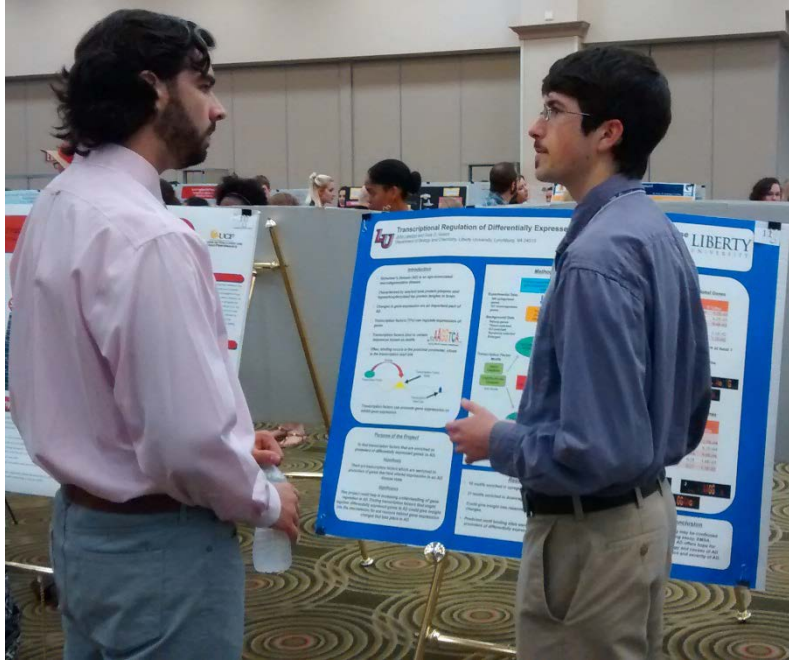
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Students Present in Orlando

John Lawson and Dominique Lopiccolo represented LU's Honors well when they presented their research at the Southern Regional Honors Council Conference in Orlando, Florida, from March 31 through April 2. John stood by his poster, "Transcriptional Regulators of Differentially Expressed Genes in Alzheimer's Disease," and answered questions. There were 104 posters from all over the country and represented disciplines across the curriculum.



Dominique presented on "Exploring Shared Pitch Dimensions in Music and Mandarin Chinese; An interdisciplinary Approach to L2 Mandarin Tone Acquisition." With her PowerPoint presentation, she presented like a pro, and then answered questions for fifteen minutes that caused a change of good dialogue and swap of email addresses for future networking. The people who attended her session were very intrigued by her proposal to teach Mandarin through the use of musical tones. The exchange of ideas was rich, giving Dominique ideas of future research, further application of her theory of method, and resolution of several problems that she had not considered.



Dr. Brenda Ayres, one of the Assistant Directors of honors accompanied the two students. She was very impressed with the quality of research. She came away encouraged by the dedication, enthusiasm, confidence, and commitment that students demonstrated toward making the world a



better place. The Lord gave the team multiple opportunities to witness for the Lord. It was obvious that the Lord's hand was on every detail of the trip.

The conference was extremely well organized. Part of the package was a pass to Universal Studios/the Island Adventure. Lunch with a keynote speaker included prime rib and a dessert that was incredible. Brownies and delicious cookies were provided for breaks.

Students were treated exceptionally well in a five-star hotel. These details are mentioned to entice Honors students to submit proposals to next year's conference. The University of Chattanooga sent 32 students to present from a program of only 150 Honors students. Surely Liberty, with its 740 Honors students (as of Fall 2016), can send a better representation next year.



Regardless, this year was a resounding successful beginning. It was the first year that LU participated in a regional conference.

With the recent Quality Enhancement Plan in place at Liberty to promote student research, it will be a continued priority to support students in developing their vision for how they can use their gifts and talents to further the Kingdom through research.



Besides the perks of an all-expense-paid trip and a significant contribution to one's dossier, what are the benefits of attending conferences and presenting papers and posters? When the question was put to John, he replied, "Especially in the field of science, communication of research results is a very important part of a researcher's job. Because these skills are so important, any

opportunity to improve them is valuable. Presenting at a conference can be a great opportunity to improve these skills, particularly giving an oral presentation which is more challenging than a poster presentation but offers more experience. Although presentations can be intimidating and made me very nervous in the past, they have gradually become easier with experience and now, after multiple presentations, I feel more confident in my presentation skills and can see presentations in a positive light.”



Dominique’s response was “I really enjoy going to conferences because they not only give me a platform from which to share my work, but they also allow me to meet other students who have the same passion for learning new information and sharing new ideas. I find this a very enriching opportunity, not just intellectually, but creatively and socially. I got to personally experience this after giving a presentation at the Southern Regional Honors Council, during which one of the persons in attendance walked up to me and shared her insight on the subject and even gave me more ideas to work with when I left. Feedback and collaboration from other intellects are key elements to any one’s research and study—both elements to be had at a conference. These things are why I love attending conferences, and why I would encourage other college students to do so too!”