



Cultivating Opportunities: STEM Education and Research at the Center for American Archeology

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Integrative, participatory research and education programs are central to the Center for American Archeology's (CAA) mission of education, research and public service. Such programs provide students with formative research experiences as they pursue training for careers in archaeology and related disciplines. In 2018, eight students at the CAA participated in "Long-term Perspectives on Human-River Dynamics at the Confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers: Interdisciplinary Research for Students in Ecology and Archeology," a National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REU, Award #1460787) program that provided students with firsthand experience in archaeological, archaeobotanical, and ethnographic research focused on human-plant interactions in the Lower Illinois Valley.



Remote Sensing at Kampsville Lock Site (11C142)

REU students learned geophysical survey methods and analysis during the first two weeks of the program. They conducted magnetic and resistance surveys at the historic Kampsville Lock Site in Kampsville, IL. Geophysical data collected by the REU crew contributed to ongoing investigation of the site by the CAA, the St. Louis District US Army Corps of Engineers, and Village of Kampsville.

Excavation at Golden Eagle (11C120)

During the third and fourth weeks, REU students joined the field crew at the Golden Eagle site to participate in ongoing CAA field research designed to document the only known mound and enclosure site in the Illinois River Valley. Students learned archaeological field and lab methods while investigating the eastern portion of the site's earthen enclosure.



Paleoethnobotany

REU students next focused on paleoethnobotany and ethnobotany. In these sessions, students participated in activities such as botanical experiments, field botany and ecology workshops, comparative collection and herbarium specimen collecting, flotation sample processing and paleoethnobotanical analyses while learning about the Lower Illinois Valley's archaeological record of indigenous plant domestication and agriculture.

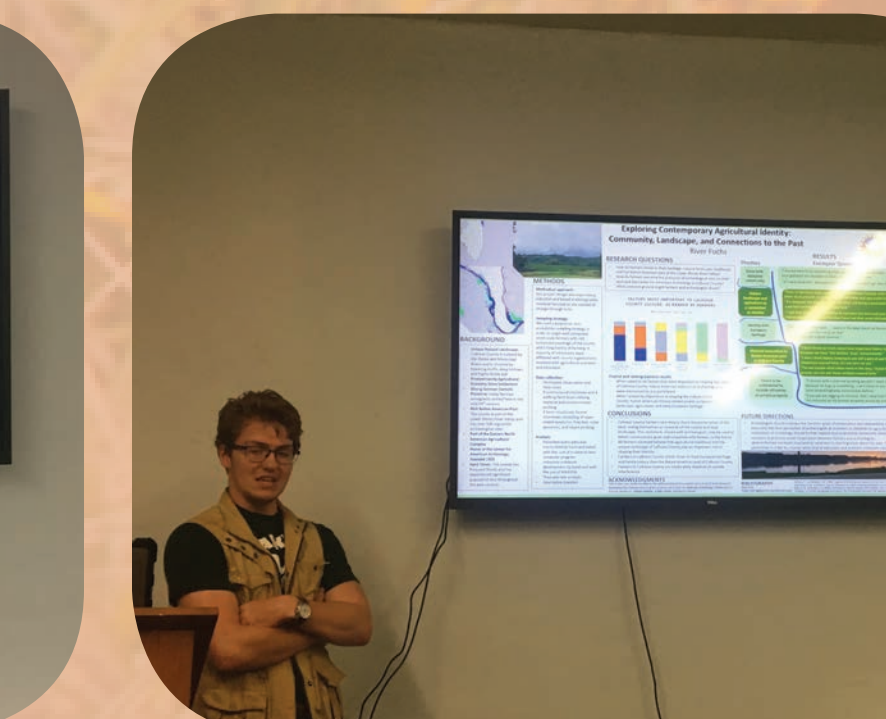
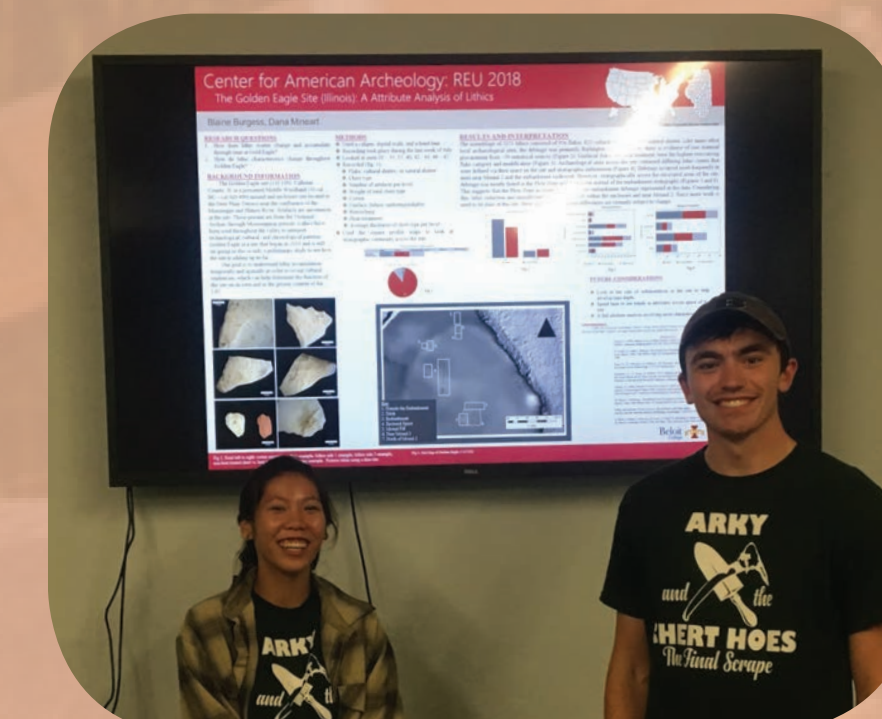
Ethnography

Students' experiences also included modern peoples' interactions with plants and the natural environment. During the ethnography component of the program, students learned ethnographic research, data collection, and analysis methods. REU students conducted ethnographic fieldwork with residents of Calhoun County to address questions concerning peoples' relationships with farming, local history, archaeology, and the unique natural environment of the Lower Illinois River Valley.



Original Undergraduate Research

Finally, REU students designed and executed original research projects focused on the program's themes. Initial results of these projects were presented in Kampsville to CAA field school participants at the Thornton Lecture Hall. In this poster session at the Midwest Archaeological Conference, they report their final results in five excellent presentations.



CAA REU 2019

In 2019, we look forward to building on the successes of this year's program. We will be accepting 10 participants into the REU program. Please see our website for details.



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