Front Page News Story Archive

November 2023

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News Stories Posted Wednesday November 1, 2023

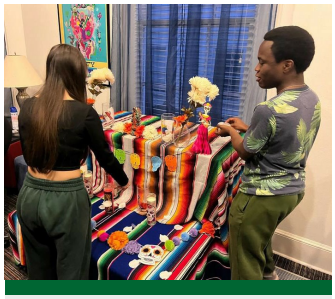
Campus Celebrations for El Dia de Los Muertos

World Languages & Cultures, Department of: Wednesday November 1, 2023

Georgia College & State University students, faculty and staff are celebrating El día de Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) in several locations on campus this week.

Working with faculty in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, students in SPAN 1002 built an altar—called an ofrenda—in the front atrium of Arts & Sciences. Members of the GCSU Latino Student Association (LSA) built their ofrenda in The Hub last week, where it has since been on display.

According to The Mexican Museum, "Día de Los Muertos acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between life and death."



Members of the GC Latino Student Association build an

Members of the LSA were encouraged to participate in the ofrenda tradition "to welcome our loved ones visiting from heaven and honor them." Students remembered their loved ones by including pictures of relatives and friends, candles and images of ornate decorated skulls—called calaveras.

Traditional ofrendas are built in honor of deceased love ones to welcome them home from Nov. 1 through

ofrenda at The Hub.

Nov. 2, when Día de Los Muertos is celebrated. The altars may vary from one culture to another, but most include marigolds, candles, photos of the deceased and cut tissue-paper designs, as well as food and beverage offerings for the dead.

Students in SPAN 1002 worked in groups to research the significance of the ofrendas and the meaning of its different elements. The SPAN 1002 sections who participated are taught by GCSU faculty members Diana Díaz Gómez, Lee Kirven and Aurora Castillo-Scott.

“They collaborated in class to choose a famous Spanish-speaking deceased person and worked on writing their biographies,” said Díaz Gómez, lecturer of Spanish. “To create the altar, each group contributed a poster on their chosen element of the ofrenda, a biography, a framed picture of the famous person they chose, and an object to display on the altar.”

Students also gave presentations, during which they lit ofrenda candles and shared information about the pre-Hispanic origins of this important holiday.

The ofrenda built by SPAN 1002 students is on display through Nov. 3 in the Arts and Sciences atrium.

Mexican death rites date from pre-Hispanic rituals that are over 3,000 years old. They’ve been depicted in murals, painted pottery and other artifacts, showing how the Day of the Dead has its origins in the rituals practiced by the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

The ofrenda in Arts & Sciences will remain on display through Friday, Nov. 3. The LSA ofrenda will remain on display in The Hub through next week and members of the GCSU community are invited to continue to contribute remembrances of photos and offerings.

News Stories Posted Wednesday November 8, 2023

Bobcats in the booth with business big shots

Management, Marketing, & Logistics, Department of: Wednesday November 8, 2023

Over the last two and a half years, student-run podcast GC Bizcast has recorded three seasons of interviews with wide-ranging and elite business professionals.

For three of the podcast's eight student hosts and producers, it's been more than a side project—it's changed who they are.

"As a college student, you think you don't have much to say—but of course you do," said Sruti Sajja, senior marketing major and co-host of the show. "Our professor was one of the first people that told us we have something important to say, and people should hear it. So, we started from that seed."

That professor? Dr. Ward Risvold, lecturer of business communications at Georgia College & State University. Using his connections to the business world, Risvold

has brought guests like London professor of finance Dr. Alex Edmans and Brooke Deterline, CEO of Courageous Leadership, to the podcast.

“Our students learn to network," Risvold said. "They learn to engage in conversations with corporate and academic leaders; but most importantly, they learn they belong in these conversations."

Dr. Risvold (left) and podcasters (from left to right) Sam Jones, Maura Foreman and Eli Daniell.

To help with editing, the podcast partners with Evelina Galova, media lab coordinator. Also a part of their collaboration with the Department of Communication, Jonathan O’Brien, ’22, a graduate of the department, helped each member on the team learn sophisticated recording equipment.

But the work, from researching guests and developing questions to recording episodes and publicizing their podcast, is all students.

Senior management major Maura Foreman and senior marketing major Charlotte Joiner are president and vice president, respectively.

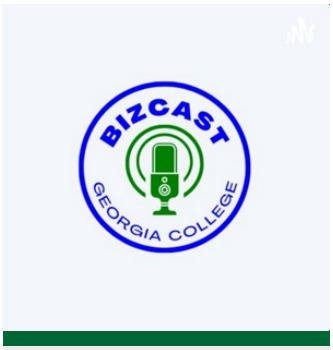
As president, Foreman does a little of everything. She’s always loved creating media and jumped at the chance to work with Risvold on the project.

“It’s been something bigger than myself,” Foreman said. “And it’s been a really fun way to combine all the things that I love: creating, talking to people and putting things out for people to experience. To me, it’s been a full-circle moment with everything I love put into one project.

Joiner, on the other hand, has seen herself grow from the ground up. She works alongside Foreman to manage the duties of producing podcast episodes, especially providing direction and guidance to newer members.

“Finding confidence within myself was a big thing for me,” Joiner said. “I think my freshman and sophomore year, before the Bizcast, I was searching for that. It really made me feel like I belonged here.”

“I think it’s really easy to feel lost at a new school,” she said, “but I think the Bizcast has definitely created a tight-knit community. We all push each other and we’re all good friends.”



Season three of the GC Bizcast is out now!

The Bizcast works every semester to release new episodes. Season three of their podcast is live now, and their newest episode that talks about the future of artificial intelligence with Promptmaster CEO David Taylor, has just been released.

You can find the GC Bizcast on Spotify, Apple or wherever you get podcasts. They're also on YouTube.

"There's something so human about sitting with someone else, and talking to them about their dreams, their goals and where they started," Sajja said. "I think that's really important for a college student to hear, just that it's not as far off as it seems."

News Stories Posted Thursday November 9, 2023

Army veteran shifts his tune toward education

Music, Department of : Thursday November 9, 2023

Afew years ago, if you'd told Army veteran and former microbiologist Arron Holland that he would be studying music education at Georgia College & State University, he probably would have laughed.

After 14 years in the military and an injury in Iraq—coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic—Arron was pushed out of the only field he'd known.

And changed the trajectory of his life.

"Coming to campus was like I was colorblind and seeing through corrective lenses for the first time," Arron said. "I had been wanting to do it and had never quite gotten there."

"It was happiness, it was jubilee," he said. "I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but it lit a fire under my behind. It's been a rollercoaster since day one, and I'm loving it."

His life has always thrummed to the rhythm of jazz. Arron started playing trombone in third grade and was raised in a family that cherished music.

The GCSU Jazz Band plays at Deep Roots in Milledgeville.

His father and grandfather were trumpet players, and they put jazz in his blood. Alongside his three siblings, also musicians, Arron would play in church and at family reunions.

At some point, life made an about-face and Arron landed in the military. His original idea of making his passion for music into a career drifted, but the music never stopped. Through the ups and downs, the trombone kept him grounded.

“When I needed to clear my head, whatever it was, I would pick up the trombone and play,” Arron said. “It had always been my go-to, my release.”

Searching for his purpose led him to Georgia College, and to music education.

He’s been introduced to Romantic and Baroque music he’s never heard—but no one made him feel like jazz wasn’t valuable. Any instrument he wants to try is available, doctorate-level faculty are approachable and kind, and he’s meeting a diverse array of his peers.

After he graduates, Arron hopes to be a band director in Washington County where he lives with his wife and four children. Ultimately, he wants to shape the curriculum of music education in the state and help middle school kids hang on to the dream he’s finally realizing.

He thinks Georgia College can get him there.

“Every decision that you make as a teacher is going to affect your students for the rest of their lives,” Arron said. “That’s what’s best about this curriculum—you can’t have blinders on, because it’s big picture from day one. It pushes you and shapes you.”

“The degree that I’m receiving here and going to use in the field is much more fulfilling than something for financial gain,” he said.

News Stories Posted Friday November 10, 2023

Old but not lost: Art students see a future for antique printing press

Art, Department of : Friday November 10, 2023

Senior Emma Avery interned at Brown Parcel Press.

Letterpresses went from heavy to light. Then, they were replaced altogether.

Now, words are everywhere. On every laptop and cellphone.

But a group of art students at Georgia College & State University sees value in the past and a future for these old machines.

“It's vital to recognize the strides we've made—not only with technology, but with the press and art in general,” said senior art studio major Emma Grace Avery of Suwanee, Georgia. “There was a time when letterpresses were the only way to communicate and mass produce something. That was the only way you could get your information out quickly and affordably.”

> **Now that we've advanced so far, I think it's important to recognize how far we've come and appreciate how the letterpress helped us get to the digital age. We should also appreciate the amazing things it can still do for us as a beautiful art form.**
>
> **- Emma Avery**

A Chandler and Price machine from the late 1800s was purchased by the university a few years ago. In the summer, it got dusted, greased and put in Ina Dillard Russell Library's upcoming book studio.

Now, it's a visual reminder of the past and motivation for a new generation of artists.

"The tactile and time-honored methods of printing help us understand the digital age more fully," said Jolene Cole, interim associate director of Instruction and Research Services and professor of library science. By acquiring this letterpress and others in the future, she hopes to "inspire individuals to engage with the past while shaping the future of printmaking."

Letterpress supplies from Jolene Cole's own collection housed at the library.

Cole brings students from the library class on "Book History" and the university's new minor in Information Studies to see and use the vintage letterpress. It's a reminder of a time when heavy-steel machinery like this was state-of-the-art.

Matt Forrest, interim chair of art, has a smaller Chandler and Price machine in his printshop. This fall, he launched a new course on letterpresses. Now, three of his students are researching the history, impact and future of these machines, first developed in 1040 A.D. China.

Moveable forms of type replaced ancient scribes—making reading more accessible to the masses.

History like this enthralled senior art major Emmaline Wellborn of Roswell, Georgia, who was first to make letterpresses her topic for independent study. She focused on different types of letterpresses, their capabilities and differences between models.

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Soon Wellborn was joined by Avery and another studio art major—Emma Kate Leach of Covington, Georgia.

Avery did a survey of letterpress shops still operating in Georgia, finding about six. Leach studied the impact letterpresses had on education, politics and the arts in Georgia. Both students would like to teach art someday—Avery in elementary school and Leach in middle or high school.

The students created a website to display a timeline and results of their investigation. They'll also present findings at the Undergraduate Humanities Symposium Nov. 10 at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia.

"The history of how the letterpress changed the world as we know it is really interesting," Leach said. "It influenced literacy rates and helped the arts grow. Before, the only way to mass produce things was through handwriting and block printing. In England in the 1500s, the literacy rate was below 10%. It was a very different world. Only the very rich were able to read, write and have any kind of books."

> **Being able to advertise or read a pamphlet at a play—these things seem small, but it actually transformed the way people enjoyed so many things, and it propelled the arts forward. It really changed every aspect of our lives.**
>
> **- Emma Leach**

Senior art majors Emma Leach and Emma Avery listen to Clemens Bak. He came to Georgia College recently to talk about the library's Chandler and Price vintage letterpress.

Recently, art students met with Clemens Bak, owner of Red Onion Press in Kennesaw. He told them all about the library's Chandler and Price—its clamps, levers, spokes, flywheel and gears. He talked about its history and how it worked.

"You have to think of presses of this era as being the main technology for communication in the world back then," Bak said. "There is nothing that was going on that did not involve the press. Think of it—computers, laptops, phones—everything that you have in this era was going through this machine."

Avery said she enjoyed learning the nitty-gritty details of working a letterpress from Bak.

> **There's more to discover and experiment with letterpress. It's not something we need to throw away. It's something we need to spend more time on—to see how far we can push it, because now that it's not used as a necessity for information, we can really get creative with it and see where we can go.**
>
> **- Emma Avery**

She’s happy people are refurbishing these old machines and educating the public.

“There's more to discover and experiment with letterpress,” Avery said. “It's not something we need to throw away. It's something we need to spend more time on—to see how far we can push it, because now that it's not used as a necessity for information, we can really get creative with it and see where we can go.”

The group went on a recent fieldtrip to visit Megan Fowler, owner of Brown Parcel Press in Sparta. Avery did a summer internship there her sophomore year and was eager to share the hands-on experience with her peers.

Fowler demonstrated how to make embossed greeting cards using a Vandercook letterpress.

Avery loves the procedure and precise crispness of letterpress and printmaking. She gets lost in the process of it—first making sure the prep work is done. Then paper is cut to size and ink spread evenly to coat the screen.

“It’s such a lost art,” Avery said. “You can just get so zoned into what you're doing. You kind of go into a mind palace. You're in this process of making the work, tweaking little things or altering how the print turns out.”

“The fact you can create so many in such a short amount of time and have such similar results is incredible. You can't really get that with anything else,” she said.

Leach likes printmaking for its capacity for mass production too. She doesn’t want people to forget.

“The letterpress is still relevant today,” Leach said. “We're not using it now to print our handouts in class anymore. But it's still very important in the way it can be used for special events, education, the arts or anytime you want an event to have a feel of elegance.”

> **The goal of the letterpress studio is to preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of historical printing. The aim is to serve as a haven for creativity, education and artistic exploration—fostering a deep appreciation for the art of printmaking and the history of the book.**
>
> **- Matt Forrest**

Cole would like to acquire more vintage letterpresses for the library and expand their uses. She'd like to offer studio hours, workshops and programming for students who study art, English and history.

Forrest said it's important to provide hands-on experiences like these for students. Recreating techniques and equipment used by historical printers gives them "a profound appreciation for the evolution of communication and dissemination of knowledge."

Immersive experiences deepen their understanding of history and sharpen critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

"The goal of the letterpress studio is to preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of historical printing," Forrest said. "The aim is to serve as a haven for creativity, education and artistic exploration—fostering a deep appreciation for the art of printmaking and the history of the book."

(Left to right) Matt Forrest, Emma Leach, Emma Avery and Clemens Bak.

The Letterpress research website, emmaavery85.wixsite.com/letterpress-research, will move to "Reclaim Hosting" at end of fall semester 2023.

News Stories Posted Tuesday November 14, 2023

GCSU welcomes brand-new Bobcats to the class of 2028

Enrollment Management : Tuesday November 14, 2023

Video

They are Bobcat Bound! Four students are now the first Bobcats to be accepted for fall semester, 2024.

Alisa Tran (Brookwood High School), Charles “Charlie” Youmans (North Gwinnett High School), Morgan Tannis (Chattahoochee High School) and Carly Altom (Lambert High School) got a surprise when their acceptance letters were hand-delivered by GCSU.

“I was definitely not expecting this,” Youmans said. “It just felt really homey when I came to go visit—all the counselors knew me by name, and it felt nice to be recognized by people I haven’t really met before.”

Thunder showed out in rare form with the GCSU Admissions team to welcome these brand-new Bobcats home.

Alisa Tran (second from left) was the first student to be accepted for GCSU's fall 2024 semester.

They’re now the first accepted into the class of 2028, leading the charge of their peers to follow. GCSU saw an 8% increase in early action admissions applications and an increase in the number of complete and high-achieving student applications over last year’s record-breaking application numbers.

Charlie Youmans (second from left) holds a banner, his parents surprised him as well.

“Not only are we proud, we’re honored and we really appreciate this opportunity,” Tannis’ mother said. “It’s an opportunity for her to join the Bobcat family and it shows you’re interested in investing in Morgan, as well as Morgan attending your school.”

Morgan Tannis accepts Admissions materials from GCSU.

GCSU is encouraging all the applicants receiving their early action admissions

acceptance notifications this week to post that they are #BobcatBound and plan to join the Bobcat Family next fall.

Congratulations, class of 2028!

News Stories Posted Thursday November 30, 2023

GCSU ecologist and students spotlight the unknown underworld of millipedes

Biology & Environmental Sciences, Department of: Thursday November 30, 2023

To say something ‘has legs’ means it has longevity and staying power.

That surely fits millipedes then, because they’ve been around forever. Thought to be earth’s first creature to leave water and breathe on land—the creeping, burrowing arthropods are essential for healthy soil and forests.

Then there are those *legs*. Lots of them.

Their legs help millipedes forage and feed, making them the ultimate composters—nature’s No. 1 soldier in waste management. They’re responsible for breaking leafy material into nutritious soil for trees and plants. They speed up forest decomposition, filtering our air and water. They help reduce erosion and keep soil moist.

Yet, despite this critical contribution to the environment, only a handful of scientists in the world study the lowly, multi-segmented invertebrate. Little is known about their life. Where millipedes go, what they do, how they interact.

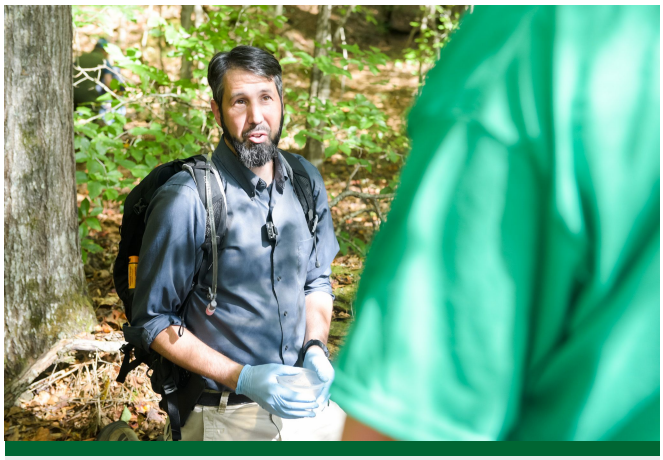
In fact, only two universities in the United States have millipede labs.Georgia College & State University is one of them—making its ecologist, Dr. Bruce Snyder, a rare expert.

> **Understanding the biodiversity of millipedes is really important to understanding how the whole system functions and how those pieces go together in an ecosystem.**
>
> **- Dr. Bruce Snyder**

“One of the reasons I like studying millipedes—and one of the reasons why it's important to study them—is because they are a really diverse group,” Snyder said. “We have lots of different tree species, lots of different understory plant species, tons of insects and earthworms and other things, and millipedes are a big component of that.”

“Understanding the biodiversity of millipedes is really important to understanding

how the whole system functions and how those pieces go together in an ecosystem," he said.



Dr. Bruce Snyder. His lab is one of only two in the U.S. that studies millipedes.

More than 13,600 species of millipede have been described worldwide, but only about 110 in Georgia—what Snyder calls a "black hole" of information, something he and his students are working to change.

Currently three graduate students and several undergrads do research with Snyder. Last summer, the two graduate biology students—Lance Andrew of Atlanta and Elena Cruz of Douglasville—accompanied Snyder to the 19th International Congress of Myriapodology in Bogota, Colombia. In 2027, Snyder will host this global millipede convention at Georgia College.

At the conference, Andrew and Cruz presented details about their research. Andrew's focusing on millipede diversity in Georgia. Cruz is working on a genome project, documenting the DNA sequence of a local species, Cherokia georgiana—commonly known "as the wrinkled flat-backed millipede." Her research mixes the study of millipedes with genetic research conducted in Dr. Arnab Sengupta's mRNA lab.

You can often find Snyder and his students in the woods at the Lake Laurel Biological Station. They get right to work—squatting and rummaging through piles of dead leaves, peeling bark from decaying logs and peering under rocks.

The group risks chiggers, ticks and poison ivy to find the ever-elusive arthropods.

Millipedes range from a couple millimeters long to about 12 inches in some African species. They come in a variety of colors—with the most legs being counted at 1,306. Most of Georgia's millipedes are smaller, only a few inches in length.

Documenting various millipedes in Georgia is an important part of

Alternate Text

Snyder's work. He and Andrew are creating a species list and map, showing the area's biodiversity, numbers and types.

Andrew started compiling this list as an undergraduate at Georgia College. He grew up loving bugs and wanted to be an entomologist. He changed his mind when he joined Snyder's lab.

Now he loves millipedes so much, he had a caricature of one tattooed to his arm.

"I'm not sure why," he said, "they're just the coolest little things to me."

In Colombia, Andrew presented on the life cycle and behavior of Georgia's flat-backed millipede. He successfully bred 7 batches of millipede eggs, learning about their gestation period, egg life stage and early larvae. He also presented a poster about the number of species—at that time a count of 111—found in Georgia.

"But we're turning up more just about every time we go out," Andrew said.

Snyder confirmed they're "constantly finding new species." This is because millipedes are so understudied here.

"We definitely have a number of species in the lab that we're pretty sure are new to science," Snyder said. "We're in the process of describing them. It's pretty common with millipedes to find new species. Before me, Georgia never had someone who focused on millipedes as a career."

> **It's a very big state. There are a lot of places we haven't explored—that no previous researchers have explored. So, every time we put a shovel in the ground, so-to-speak, we're finding undescribed species or species that are known but new to the state.**
>
> **- Dr. Bruce Snyder**

GCSU Biology graduate students Andrew Lance and Elena Cruz rummage through dead leaves and rotted logs to find millipedes for their research.

In the last few years, Andrew has discovered about seven new species of millipede on his own.

At first, it was pretty cool. Then, it became a bit routine.

“I’ve got this thing that science has never encountered before, right here under my microscope,” Andrew said. “And then the second one happened and the third and the fourth, fifth, sixth. At this point it’s like, ‘OK, fine, I guess someone’s gotta do it, might as well be me.’”

All kidding aside, Andrew feels lucky to be at Georgia College, where there are so many opportunities for research.

> **There’s a lot of uncharted area that I get to explore here. There are a lot of undescribed species and a lot more room to contribute to something important.**
>
> **- Andrew Lance**

He'd like to work for a government land management agency, like the Georgia Department of Natural Resources or the U.S. Forest Service. His research with Snyder is the springboard to an outdoor career like these, but Andrew said he might also get a Ph.D. and teach.

"There's a lot of uncharted area that I get to explore here," Andrew said. "There are a lot of undescribed species and a lot more room to contribute to something important."

Sophomore environmental science major Sydney Irons of White, Georgia, is getting a minor in biology. She was only at the university one month when she got the chance to join Snyder's lab. Now, she's breaking into new territory too—by finding a way to track millipedes.

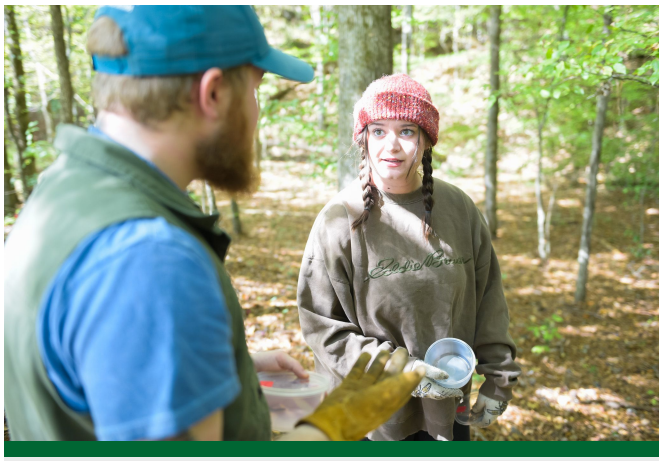
If Irons can attach a transmitter—or mark millipedes with something that responds to UV light—ecologists might learn more about where millipedes go, if they prefer to eat one leaf over another and how they spend most of their time.

But millipedes tend to be moist, slippery and wiggly.

"I'm looking into ways we can mark them and track them because, surprisingly, we don't have very many methods on marking and tracking arthropods," Irons said. "Anything we put on them just falls off, because they're so slick."

Right now, she's experimenting with fluorescent powder. If that doesn't work, Irons thinks she might be able to attach metal braces or brackets that move with the segments.

Like Andrew and Irons, Cruz enjoys learning about the "overlooked" and lowly millipede. She likes to hunt them at night after it rains, because certain species glow under ultraviolet (UV) light, making them easier to find.



Lance and Cruz in the woods at Lake Laurel Biological Station.

Her genome project requires sequencing the entire genetic code of the local species.

Cruz does DNA extractions to obtain high quality samples to use in sequencing.

Another goal is to observe how genes are expressed, particularly under stressful conditions.

Few people have ever done this.

The general lack of genetic information on soil organisms makes Cruz feel her research is important.

With advances in technology, this work gives her a unique set of skills that can be used in many laboratory situations. Many schools must send their DNA samples out to be analyzed, but Georgia College has its own in-house sequencer.

> **I do feel like we're pioneers on the edge of something.**
>
> **- Elena Cruz**

"The equipment I work with is expensive. A lot of labs don't offer this kind of opportunity," Cruz said. "I'm really lucky to have my own project like this. We have more individualized attention here, than we would at a larger school. Both my mentors are super supportive and helping me to envision what I might do in the future."

"It's kind of a niche field of study," she said. "There's a really big lack of genetic information about millipedes. I do feel like we're pioneers on the edge of something."