

FROM THE DEAN'S DESK – October 12, 2018

THE RADFORD UNIVERSITY ARTIS COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY NEWSLETTER



Radford University Students Leah Cort, Brittany Rinaldi, and Tommy Callahan working in the lab as a part of the North American Dendroecological Fieldweek held over the summer.

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STUDENTS AND FACULTY PARTICIPATE IN DENDROECOLOGICAL FIELDWEEK



Examining a tree during the North American Dendroecological Fieldweek.

This summer, Radford University students had an opportunity to investigate ecological questions via the North American Dendroecological Fieldweek (NADEF), co-organized by Dr. Stockton Maxwell, Associate Professor of Geospatial Science. The program is an intensive 9-day workshop that takes students from the field to the lab and culminates in a presentation to the entire workshop.

The NADEF provides an intensive learning experience in dendrochronology. Previous experience in field or laboratory-based tree-ring techniques is not required and participants range from new initiates in the field to seasoned veterans with over 20 years of experience.

Group leaders of the fieldweek are among the top scientists in their respective fields of study as related to global environmental change. Because the topic groups vary from year to year, the program has many repeat attendees, in addition to first-comers.

This year Dr. Maxwell brought three students from Radford University to the Fieldweek - Brittany Rinaldi (GEOS), Leah Cort (BIOL), and Tommy Callahan (GEOS). Ms. Rinaldi and Ms. Cort were awarded undergraduate fellowships funded by a National Science Foundation (awarded to Dr. Maxwell and his colleagues)

grant to attend the workshop. Additionally, Ms. Rinaldi and Mr. Callahan were awarded additional fellowship money to support continuation of their group project back at Radford University "This trip gave me experience actively working through scientific research methods for data that my group had collected," stated Mr. Callahan. "Brittany and I came away with the Fellowship Award to continue our research and plan to work on that throughout this semester and possibly through the following semester."

Ms. Rinaldi added “It was a huge honor to be selected by my professor Dr. Maxwell because I know he is very passionate about this field of science.” It is expected that Ms. Rinaldi and Mr. Callahan will present their findings at the American Association of Geographers Annual Conference in April.

A few days before NADEF starts, group leaders spend time scouting the region for respective projects. During the NADEF, the first day is spent taking a tour of the local area and listening to engaging lectures from experts familiar with the local region. Each team of group leaders also explains their proposed projects so that participants can be thinking about which group to join. Each group then spends 1-2 days conducting fieldwork, followed by four days of laboratory preparation and analyses.



Brittany Rinaldi presenting her work at the end of the NADEF.

Ms. Rinaldi recalls her experience at the A.L. Mickelson Field Station in Cody, Wyoming. “We were there for a week and a half,” she stated. “Throughout the conference, we conducted field work in the beautiful areas surrounding Yellowstone National Park, and on our off days we got the opportunity to explore the National Park.”

Without question, learning through experience has no equal, and NADEF provides a rich, intense, and hands-on learning environment. Since 1990, the NADEF has successfully challenged participants to



Dr. Stockton Maxwell

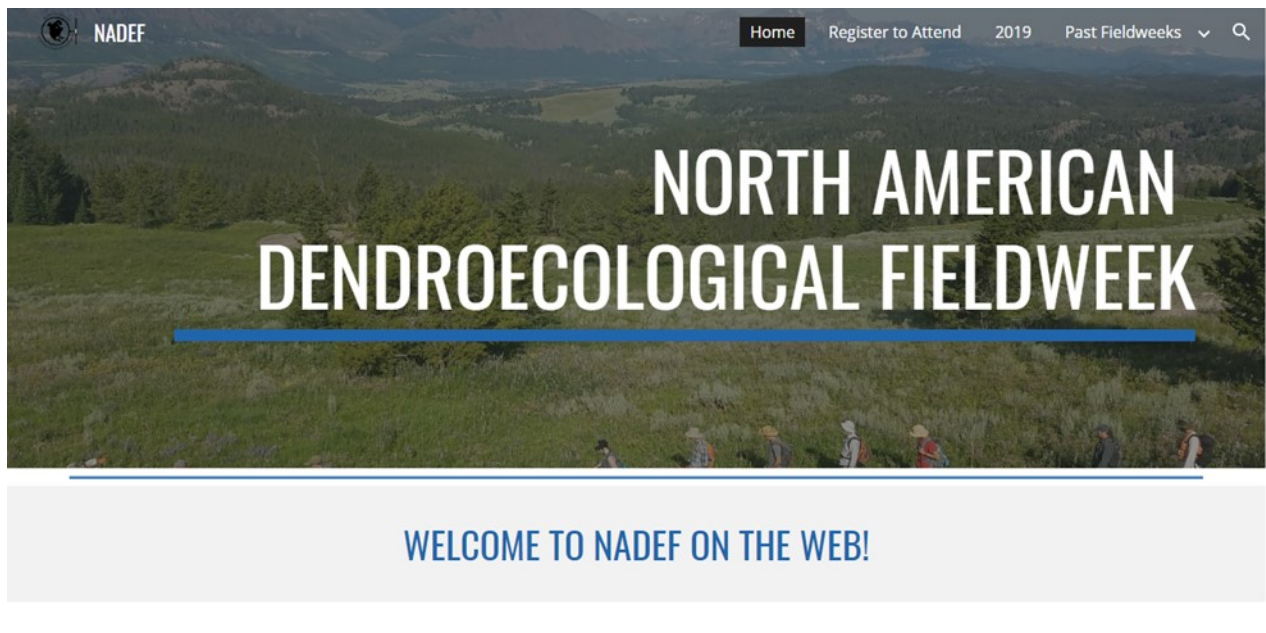
explore new approaches to multi-disciplinary research. While tree-ring research methods are emphasized, NADEF projects have effectively combined elements from many different disciplines to design novel solutions to ecological hypotheses. NADEF attracts a diverse audience from disciplines from locations around the world, never stays in one place, and addresses research topics concerning all types of natural science. It is usually a very intense week, with a vast amount of work accomplished by dedicated participants who come to learn. Past

NADEF projects have been published, used as bases for proposals to funding agencies, or formed core parts of theses or dissertations.

Ms. Rinaldi summed up how the experience helps her realize her dreams. “My interest in Geospatial Science is rooted in my passion for nature and the environment,” she stated. “This major allows me to utilize technology to help solve modern environmental problems. After graduation, I hope to work for a conservation organization and help solve the major environmental problems of the world.”

Mr. Callahan added “I encourage other students to take part in this program because it is a great learning opportunity to get experience in fast paced and intense field work.”

For more information on NADEF, please visit <https://sites.google.com/view/nadef>



RADFORD UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STUDENTS PRESENT AT REGIONAL MATHEMATICS CONFERENCES

On October 5th, the Virginia Council of Math Specialists held their annual conference in Stafford, Virginia at the University of Mary Washington. Cameron Leo, a graduate student in the M.S. program in Mathematics Education and Alex Largen, a Computer Science major provided a presentation for the conference with the assistance of Dr. Agida Manizade, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics.



Cameron Leo and Alex Largen at the Virginia Council of Math Specialists Conference.



Cameron Leo, Dr. Agida Manizade, and Radford University Alumnus Matt Akers at the Southwest Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics Annual Conference.

On September 29th, Cameron Leo co-presented a program with Dr. Agida Manizade at the Southwest Virginia Council of Teachers of Mathematics Annual Conference in Abingdon, VA. Attending the conference were quite a few familiar faces. “We also ran into several of our former undergraduate and graduate students,” recalls Dr. Manizade.

REALISE PEER ROLE MODELS HELP THEIR FELLOW STUDENTS SUCCEED

The Radford University REALISE (Realising Inclusive Science Excellence) program is helping students in the areas of biology, chemistry and physics find new pathways to success through engaging coursework and support. One of the key elements of the program is the utilization of Peer Role Models to provide guidance. A team of 12 peer role models were selected for fall 2018 and they have hit the ground running, reaching over 300 students through a variety of classes since the start of the semester.



Ashley Austin introduces the Peer Role Model program to BIOL 131 students.



Peer Role Model Leslie Molina-Arana (front right) shares scheduling tips with chemistry students Jacey Estep, Rebecca Salen, and Kayla Snyder at a Drop-In session.

They are now conducting drop-in sessions where students can stop in to chat, vent or strategize. Appointments are not necessary for these quick meetings but students can contact Dr. Tara Phelps-Durr to receive a weekly schedule of the times and locations of these sessions. Schedules are also being posted throughout the Center for the Sciences.

A mixer was also held in September where 41 students and 19 faculty members gathered on the Main Street level of the Center for the Sciences for an evening of snacks, stars (in the Planetarium) and a scavenger hunt.

Through these events, a stronger support network for students is created which will benefit them as they move forward with their studies.



Students interview faculty to match the "fun fact" with the professor and win prizes in a scavenger hunt at the fall student-faculty mixer..

GEOSPATIAL SCIENCE FACULTY MEMBER ACTIVE IN WASHINGTON DC

Dr. Grigory Ioffe, Professor of Geospatial Science at Radford University recently took part in several important activities in Washington D.C. On Friday, October 5th, Dr. Ioffe participated in a briefing for A. Wess Mitchell, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. Long recognized as a leading expert on Belarus, Dr. Ioffe has authored numerous publications on the nation and its leadership.



Dr. Grigory Ioffe (left) being interviewed on the program *Current Time*.



Following the briefing, Dr. Ioffe participated in an interview with the Voice of America digital TV show *Current Time*, addressing recent events in the US. The program is produced in the United States for a Russian Audience. The full interview is available in Russian at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Drbqa6t9xwU&t=1888s> and Dr. Ioffe appears from the 24 minute mark to the 31 minute mark. While this was Dr. Ioffe's first interview from the studio with this program, he has participated many times before with them via Skype.

DATA AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT GRADUATE SECURES TOP POSITION

Recent Data and Information Management (DAIM) Program graduate, Steve Oake is now responsible for a multibillion-dollar investment portfolio and is the gatekeeper for the flow of data into and out of the organization he works for.

"I am responsible for importing information provided by institutions into our database and converting it into reports that allow our management and Board of Directors to make better business decisions," Steve stated. "I also continually analyze our database looking for patterns in which might be viewed as early warning signs of potential trouble across multiple categories."

After completing Radford University's DAIM Program in May 2018, Steve was hired as a data analyst at a national banking organization located in Durham, Nc.



Steve Oake

"I graduated the program feeling confident that, although I did not know everything, there was to know on the subject of Data and Information Management, I had the skills I needed to fill in the blanks," Steve said.

Steve also graduated from Radford with his B.S. degree in computer science and technology while specializing in software engineering and database administration.

Steve feels that Radford prepared him well for the position he holds now, "The database and Microsoft Excel training I received at Radford has helped me immensely in my current position," Steve stated. "I was able to take the knowledge I learned at to read the code and quickly learn the language nuances."

Steve has multiple faculty members to thank for being great advisors and teachers throughout his journey in the DAIM program. "My professors helped guide my progress, understand the world of data storage, develop skills to adapt new languages quickly, and gave me confidence to work as a data analyst," he stated.

Although Radford holds career fairs for students to gain connections and meet companies as prospective employees, Steve discovered his company on his own.

He advises students to search for the right job for them and not to get fixated on a certain career path, "Allow the opportunities to present themselves and find a good fit," Steve said. "You spend a significant amount of your waking hours at your job to find one that you are excited to attend every day."

"Radford will always have a special place in my heart, and I will forever cherish the experiences and relationships I gained during my time there," Steve stated.

Story by Emily Lewis