



College of Sciences & Mathematics Newsletter
December 2022



CoSM Faculty Spotlight Shields Selected for Microbiology Lectureship

Dr. Robert Shields, assistant professor of microbiology, was selected to receive the 2022 Randall Lectureship Award, presented by the South Central Branch of the American Society for Microbiology. Shields presented his lecture and accepted the award during the organization's annual conference, which was hosted by Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Shreveport. Shields was nominated for the award by **Dr. Stephen Mullin**, chair, Department of Biological Sciences.

CoSM Faculty Spotlight

Medina-Bolivar to Lead Doctoral Programs

Dr. Fabricio Medina-Bolivar, professor of plant metabolic engineering, is the [new director](#) of the doctoral programs in environmental sciences and molecular biosciences. He will meet regularly with Dr. Jennifer Bouldin, dean, Sciences and Mathematics, who announced the appointment. One of the most productive researchers at A-State, Medina-Bolivar joined the Arkansas Biosciences Institute faculty in 2005. The Arkansas Research Alliance named him an ARA Fellow last year.



CoSM Faculty Spotlight

Merten and Student Work on Research Grant

As part of a National Science Foundation grant, **Dr. Jonathan Merten**, associate professor of chemistry, spent time at the University of Florida during the summer setting up experiments in the lab of a colleague and collaborator. He and his undergraduate research student, **Shealyn Chestnut**, joined UF colleagues to use a novel high-resolution spectrograph for measuring the mass of a laser-induced plasma. The [experiments complement results](#) from a spectrometer in Merten's lab.

CoSM Faculty Spotlight

McKay Consulting on Grain Transport Issues

Dr. Tanja McKay, professor of entomology and interim associate chair, biological sciences, is part of a team working with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to [study their food aid supply chain](#) as it pertains to grain protection. They are examining new bag technologies and best practices for fumigation of grains, such as rice and sorghum, as it moves from the United States by train, truck or cargo ship, and ending in ports in Djibouti, South Africa and Yemen.



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