

MentorSHIP can be used to describe the unique program offered at Shippensburg University where faculty and students work on research projects which often become the springboard to a fulfilling career or graduate school. **The joint undergraduate faculty/student research program** is funded annually as part of the SU Foundation's unrestricted grant support to the University. Last year 56 individual research projects were funded for a total of \$40,000. This involved 43 faculty members, 102 students and 17 programs within the three colleges.

2007-2008 senior **Scott Jones**, a Biology major in the Ecology and Environmental Science track, became involved in research projects as a sophomore. With another student, he studied the habits of the caddisfly to better understand their cannibalistic behavior. They presented the results at the CPUB (The Commonwealth of PA University Biologists) conference at Kutztown University and the Ecological Society of America Conference. Scott also submitted a manuscript on this research to the scientific journal, *Northeastern Naturalist*.

"Having the chance to get some hands on experience", said Scott, "both in doing research and in publishing papers, has confirmed my desire to work in the field of Biology."

In his junior year, he undertook a similar project researching cannibalism and aggression versus kinship in young salamanders. A different type of research his senior year involved processing the data for an online atlas of reptile and amphibian species of special concern in Pennsylvania. "None of these research projects would have gotten off the ground without the help and support of Dr. Tim Maret," Scott reflected. "He has been my advisor and mentor for all of these research projects and I'm very grateful for his assistance."

Scott is now attending Marshall University in West Virginia for his masters degree in Biology.

Beth Zucchoni, a 2007-2008 chemistry/biochemistry major, also undertook a research project her senior year. In simple terms Beth and faculty member Dr. Robin McCann tried to determine the path by which the outside of the cell talks to the inside to cause vision-loss in diabetes. The research was challenging, it involved learning many new skills, and it had wider medical applications. "I worked heartily on it for one year", said Beth "even coming in multiple days over breaks."

With the research funding, they purchased essential supplies and covered the cost of attending the American Chemical Society national meeting, a mega-conference of international standing, where they presented the results. Asked how Dr. McCann had mentored her, Beth responded, "She taught me new techniques, how to think through problems and how to communicate results."

Beth is currently studying Biochemistry at the University of Maryland. Her goal is to find a career in research.