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National Science Foundation Notes Winthrop's Success at Increasing Science Literacy

Winthrop University

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Quick Facts

- The work of Takita Sumter and colleagues was noted in the National Science Foundation's newest "Connecting Chemistry to Everyday Life" feature.



Pat Owens

ROCK HILL, S.C. — **The National Science Foundation** has recognized Winthrop University's approach to general chemistry and the subsequent positive student outcomes in its recent "**Connecting Chemistry to Everyday Life**" feature.

Tagged as "**Teaching focus ignites student interest in science**," the foundation highlights past NSF-funded research and its outcomes. A faculty team at Winthrop worked to increase science literacy through a medicinal and natural approach, showing freshmen students chemistry in the context of daily life. This initiative demonstrated to students the relevance of chemistry and sparked their interest.

Some of the students then looked for undergraduate research experiences in those areas and later decided to pursue science careers, such as alum Ashton Brock, who has been admitted into the Ph.D. program in the University of Virginia's biochemistry program. Brock's research was supported by **Winthrop's National Institutes of Health-funded Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE)** program. The initiative was led by **Associate Professor of Chemistry Takita Sumter**.

Chemistry Department Chair Pat Owens noted that a national challenge the country faces is the small percentage of science PhD candidates who are African-American or from other underrepresented groups. The heart of the highlight is to shine a spotlight on a successful approach to motivate students from these groups to pursue graduate and professional opportunities in the field.

For more information visit the **Department of Chemistry, Physics and Geology website**.

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IN THE HEART OF THE CAROLINAS

