

SUU professor awarded iUTAH Research Catalyst Grant

by iUtah

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Professor Christopher Monson from Southern Utah University recently received funding to enhance water research capacity and expand undergraduate student research opportunities. Photo courtesy of SUU

CEDAR CITY – Researchers from Utah Valley University and Southern Utah University will receive funding this year to enhance water research capacity and expand undergraduate student research opportunities.

The 2016 iUTAH Research Catalyst Grant recipients were announced by iUTAH EPSCoR, a National Science Foundation-supported program that focuses on improving sustainability of water resources in Utah. Professors Christopher Monson from Southern Utah University (SUU), and Eddy Cadet from Utah Valley University (UVU) have been funded by iUTAH to work with undergraduates, other faculty members, and with other research institutions, community groups, and professional organizations in Utah.

This is the fourth year that iUTAH has given out the Catalyst grants, and also the fourth year that faculty members from SUU and UVU have been awarded grants in this competition.

Researchers receive this award as part of iUTAH's multi-institutional project to integrate research, training, and education, aimed at strengthening science for Utah's water future.

"It is exciting to fund these collaborative research projects at Utah universities whose missions focus primarily on undergraduate education," said iUTAH Program Director Michelle Baker. "With these awards, we are creating new opportunities to build productive partnerships, while furthering research that expands our understanding of the state's water resources."

iUTAH RCG awards channel up to \$20K per project to primarily undergraduate institutions in Utah. Past awards, totaling more than \$200K, have involved faculty members and students from every university in the state.

"These grants focus on building our state's STEM capacity," Dan Bedford, iUTAH RCG Committee chair, said. "We feel strongly that the projects awarded this year build on capacity by engaging undergraduate students in hands-on research in the area of water sustainability."

The first project funded this year investigates the impact of *Phragmites australis* control on Utah Lake water quality and is led by Professor Eddy Cadet. He will work in collaboration with Professors Steven Emerman and Weihong Wang, both of UVU.

The second project, led by Professor Christopher Monson, focuses on measuring oxygen levels and their correlation to microbial life in bodies of water that are typically oxygen deprived, including the Great Salt Lake. His collaborators include Professors Zachary Aanderud, of Brigham Young University, and Kim Weaver, of SUU.

Both projects exemplify iUTAH's RCG objectives, which are to have a strong undergraduate research component and involve undergraduates in both process and end product.

In addition, these research projects help to promote collaborations within the sponsored institutions, thereby working to strengthen iUTAH's collaborative research network. Professors Monson and Cadet join a list of 13 previous RCG grantees, including 2015 recipients Professors Steven Emerman, Michael Bunds, and Weihong Wang, of UVU; Gary Johnson, of Weber State University; and Jacqualine Grant, of SUU, who continue to work on building further capacity to grow Utah STEM enterprises.

