

UNews7



# STUDENTS PRESENT RESEARCH AT NATIONAL DIVERSITY CONFERENCE

## Relationships among community concerns and green urban infrastructure in the Jordan River Corridor

**Luis Vidal, University of Utah**  
 Research Mentors: Dr. Mark Brunson, Taya Carothers, Utah State University

### Goals

- Explore the relationships between residents and their use of local green urban infrastructure (constructed wetlands, parks, urban creeks, urban trails, etc.) in the Jordan River Corridor.
- Identify what issues and benefits the river currently has to the resident population divided by ethnicity.
- Explore the relationship of level of engagement with local urban green spaces and support for new parks and perceived quality of life.

### Research Methods

- We followed the public (street) intercept model that is proven to be effective in more diverse communities (Miller et al, 1997). We strategically selected areas to survey and conveniently chose participants in the area.

### Results

- A broad positive support for parks and positive quality of life was seen. The data was categorized by race/ethnicity with "Other minorities" includes Native American, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Mixed/other.

**Table 1:** Shows where responses were collected, a total of 401 responses recorded.

Public Parks and Trails	Community Center	Public Events
30%	32%	42%

**Figure 3:** The survey was conducted using iPads and was available in English and Spanish. All questions and answers are available in the appendix.

**Figure 2:** Proportions of ethnicity and race of the sample population.

**Table 2 (left):** Shows responses indicating strength of support of proposed needs and wants.

**Table 3 (right):** Shows the frequency of visit of a green urban area (constructed wetland).

**Table 3:** Shows a general support of parks with some differences in groups.

**Table 3:** Shows responses to quality of life sorted into groups. Similar trends among Latino and White groups are observed.

**Impact:** Study results are used to help city officials better design parks and green areas to residents input. The Results offer insights into the views of diverse west side neighborhoods not previously available.

**Figure 1:** A satellite map of Salt Lake City, UT with the target neighborhoods highlighted. The Jordan River Corridor on the west side (west of Interstate 15) runs from the south to north passing the Glendale, Poplar Grove, Fair park and Rose Park neighborhoods.

**IFELLOWS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM**  
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Two students, Luis Vidal from the University of Utah and Joydino Beyale from Utah State University Eastern, recently presented their water research at the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, or SACNAS (<http://sacnas.org/events/national-conf>), National Conference for Diversity in STEM in Long Beach, California, on Oct. 13-15, 2016.

Their research was conducted as part of the National Science Foundation-funded iUTAH (<http://iutahepscor.org/>) project, which is aimed at building statewide capacity to conduct research on vital environmental issues facing the state, specifically water sustainability. The project integrates research, training and education to support Utah's next-generation STEM workforce and contribute to the education of and engagement with an informed, water-wise citizenry. iUTAH stands for Innovative Urban Transitions and Arid-region Hydro-sustainability.

Research for their presentations at SACNAS started last summer, when the two students were accepted into the iUTAH iFellows undergraduate research experience. This 11-week program

students were accepted into the iUTAH iFellows undergraduate research experience. This 11-week program culminated in the creation of a formal presentation and paper. Vidal's work was titled, "Cross Cutting Relationships Among Community Concerns and Green Urban Infrastructure in the Jordan River Corridor." Beyale's work was titled, "Determining the Quantity and Quality of Rainwater Drainage from Various Rooftops."



PHOTO CREDIT: iUTAH

Luis Vidal, second from left, with several members of the Utah chapter attending the conference.

"iUTAH is proud to not only provide research opportunities for undergraduate students from across Utah, but also support students in sharing their research at relevant conferences," said Ellen Eiriksson, iUTAH Education, Outreach and Diversity coordinator.

"It was a little intimidating at first with so many people," said Vidal, a junior studying geology and environmental science at the University of Utah. "There was a great sense of inclusion in the conference and being around other students with similar backgrounds, especially when meeting other earth scientists of similar backgrounds."

While time was tight at the conference, which had record turnout with more than 4,000 attendees, and 1,000 student research presenters, students found opportunities to learn about graduate schools and internships, meet faculty and students from schools throughout the country, and get information about key resources and programs. The next SACNAS National Conference will be held on Oct. 19-21, 2017, in Salt Lake City, providing more Utah students and researchers a chance to attend.

"Both Luis's and Joydino's iFellows research allowed them to connect with a wide audience," Eiriksson said. "Their iUTAH faculty mentors helped the students develop skills to share this research on a national scale, and we hope they now feel empowered to use this research and their skills to positively impact their communities."

When asked what advice they would give to other students interested in going to undergraduate conferences, Beyale said, “work hard, get involved with your college, and most importantly, be connected with your mentors and professors.”

## Media Contacts

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