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.”

“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

**Mark Brunson** | director of education, outreach and diversity, iUTAH
- Office: 435-797-2458
- mark.brunson@usu.edu

**Jeannine Huenemann** | communications specialist, iUTAH
- Office: 435-797-0984
- jeannine.huenemann@usu.edu

**Annalisa Purser** | Communications Specialist, University Marketing & Communications
- Office: 801-581-7295
- Mobile: 435-232-0312
- annalisa.purser@utah.edu