



Independent Research with the UTSA Bee Research Program

Sally Lent, B.S. in Environmental Science, May 2020

Intellectual Achievement

SUMMARY

From February 2019 to 2020, I had the opportunity to conduct my own independent research through the Department of Environmental Science's newly established Bee Research Program. Thanks to funding from the UTSA Office of Sustainability and the help of Mr. Jeffrey Jackson and Dr. Jessica Beckham, I was able to develop a research study looking at the family richness of bees in Bexar County to provide a historical basis for future studies. The goal of the Bee Research Program is to contribute to existing bee studies and gain hands-on experience in the field of research.

Over the course of this project, I gained valuable experience that helped me grow as a researcher and aspiring academic and aided me in my subsequent intellectual pursuits. This was an incredible opportunity that helped me develop my identity as a researcher and was beneficial in preparing me for graduate school and my future career.



SPICES

My experience with my research project falls under the Intellectual Achievement category because through this program, I was able to successfully design and complete a research study.

HERBS

During this research project, I embodied resilience. Before I began the project, I was completely unfamiliar with bees, so I had to teach myself everything. I made many mistakes, but I learned from them to see my project to completion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

My results showed that Bexar County has an abundance of bees in the Apidae, Halictidae, and Megachilidae families. I concluded that the two data collection methods I used were useful in collecting different bee families, suggesting both methods should be used to catalogue bee family richness.

I learned that I was more capable than I thought because I was able to succeed, even though I had no prior experience with bees or academic research.



IMPACT

The bees I collected during field collection were pinned and stored to serve as voucher specimens, or a permanent record of the presence of the insect to be used in future studies. My bees are already being used to help this year's pick of Bee Research Program students by providing an easy and fast way to identify bees for their own projects.

This project helped me gain confidence in my skills as a scientist by giving me the opportunity to conduct research of my own design and allowing me to present my results at conferences.

ADVICE

My advice to students that are new to research is to not be afraid of mistakes. As someone unexperienced in research, mistakes will undoubtedly happen and that's ok. A good researcher learns to make each mistake a lesson, not a failure.