

# Scientist of the Month



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## Mackenzie Jenkins

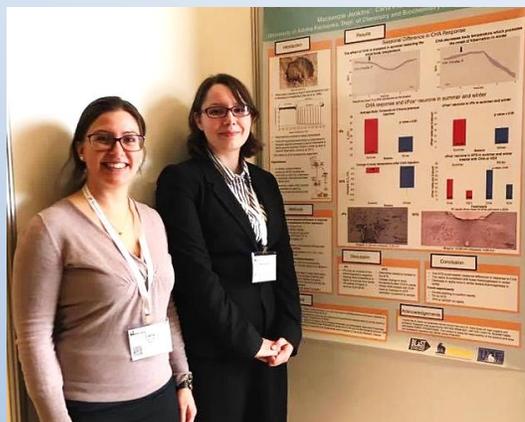
Mackenzie Jenkins is a 2018-2019 academic year BLaST Undergraduate Research Experience (URE) student, and was previously awarded the summer 2017 and spring 2018 URE. Jenkins is a senior pursuing her BS in Chemistry at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus with a minor in Japanese. She grew up in Wasilla, Alaska, and moved to Fairbanks to attend UAF. Jenkins plans to apply for medical school and pursue emergency medicine. When she is not studying, she spends her time hiking, traveling, and learning languages.

### Research

Jenkins' past research started in Japan, where she spent one year studying protein binding mechanisms in respect to tumor metastasis. When she returned to Fairbanks, she started working at Dr. Kelly Drew's lab. Part of her project is to identify regions in the brainstem that regulate the seasonal response to CHA, a drug that promotes the onset of hibernation in the Arctic ground squirrel. She has presented with her graduate mentor at several conferences in- and out-of-state to include, the 2018 University of Alaska Biomedical Research Conference (UA-BRC) in Anchorage, the 2018 Experimental Biology conference in San Diego, CA, and the 2017 World Sleep Conference in Prague, Czech Republic. She has also been awarded the Dean's choice for her poster at the Undergraduate Research of Scholarly Activity (URSA) Research Day in April, 2018. Jenkins is coauthor on a paper, currently under revision. In Spring 2019, she and her mentors will prepare a second manuscript for publication.

### Mentoring

Through her involvement in Dr. Kelly Drew's lab in hibernation, she has been mentored extensively by BLaST Graduate Mentoring Research Assistant (GMRA) Carla Frare since Fall of 2016. Jenkins said, "I have learned advanced techniques and have gained confidence to work independently in the lab". She further states that Frare has been instrumental in her development by sharing research knowledge and experiences. This has helped her feel more prepared and more well-rounded. This will help when she plans to apply to medical schools. She also was mentored by Dr. Satoshi Takahashi and Dr. Hiroyuki Oikawa at the Tohoku University in Japan.



Above: Mackenzie Jenkins (r) and her mentor Carla Frare (l) present a poster at the World Sleep Conference in Prague, Czech Republic Oct. 7-11, 2017.

