

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

# CALS Connection

VOLUME 12 SPRING 2010

UF Undergrads Make  
Medical Advancements for  
HIV and Epilepsy Patients

Horse Enterprise  
Management Class Hosts  
Ropin' in the Swamp Event

CALS Student Travels the World

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
FLORIDA



# Miller Lab Provides Opportunities for Undergraduate Research

BY SAM HOLMES

The Miller Lab provides serious undergraduate science majors the opportunity to boost their resumes and potentially publish research.

A unique entomology laboratory has created an open door for undergraduate researchers to gain hands-on experience and boost their resumes.

The Miller Lab in the entomology and nematology department enables students to become involved in research at an early stage in their college career.

Dr. Christine Miller, who founded the Miller Lab, is a scientist, teacher and mentor. Her work is dedicated to improving the understanding of natural selection.

"My goal is to advance science as a whole, especially in the area of animal behavior. I primarily focus on mate choice and male competition for mating opportunities," Miller said.

The Miller Lab provides serious undergraduate science majors the opportunity to boost their resumes and potentially

publish research. Fae Nageon de Lestang, an entomology and nematology senior, recently presented one of her projects at the Entomological Society of America's Annual Meeting. In addition, she has had one project published and another is in review.

"The experience was rewarding, and I was glad to have my work recognized by the scientific community," Naegon de Lestang said.

Ben Anderson, a recent entomology and nematology graduate, said the tools learned from Dr. Miller have been extremely valuable.

"I feel like Dr. Miller understands what it means to be a researcher, but she also understands what it means to be a teacher," Anderson said. "She blends the two in such a combination that learning is inevitable for her students."

To gain hands-on experience, research in the laboratory is complemented with outdoor research, Miller said. Most of the research is based on the sexual selection process; however, students can work on other topics.

The process of sexual selection involves examining specific traits that help an insect achieve matings.

"The research explores the costs and benefits of mate choice, mating behaviors, and reproduction in general," Miller said.

Students interested in assisting in research or conducting their own research should speak with Miller. Basic science classes are required to be eligible for the program, but when choosing students for research, she said that having a passion for science and a strong interview are more important than test scores. □

Ben Anderson and Linhchi Nguyen work in the greenhouse on a project examining the use of social information by cactus bugs.

Fae Nageon de Lestang has written two scientific papers since starting in the laboratory two years ago. She is an entomology and nematology senior.

