

A Teacher Inspired by Her MRSEC RET Program Experience Develops Her Own Research Experience

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Jamie Lauer, a Wisconsin (WI) high school teacher, participated in the MRSEC's cross-cultural Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) program in 2019 and 2021. The program is run in collaboration with the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez (UPRM) to give teachers in WI and PR authentic research experiences in labs at UPRM and in MRSEC. During the 2019 RET capstone week, Jamie traveled to PR where she learned about the geography, culture and educational systems of the island. During the virtual 2021 program, Jamie learned about the native Taino people of PR.

Inspired by these experiences, Jamie developed her own summer research project in PR and was awarded funding for it by the American Chemical Society. In PR, Jamie will work with several different researchers to study the El Yunque Rain Forest and its recovery from Hurricane Maria, invasive aquatic species in a lake in PR, and the culture of the Taino people. Jamie will leverage her MRSEC RET-inspired research experience to create a classroom module combining science and culture for her students.



During 2019 capstone week, Jamie guides colleagues through her research-inspired classroom activity (top left) and learns about native flora in PR (top right). Professional development workshops during the virtual RET program (bottom) included learning about native peoples in WI and PR.