

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 10, 2009

FY09-06

Media Contact: Catherine Crawley, 865-974-9350, ccrawley@nimbios.org

UT Undergraduates Selected for National Biology Education Conference

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Two undergraduates from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, have been invited to share their views on how to improve biology education at a national conference to be held in Washington, DC, July 15-17.

Jonathan Lockhart, a senior majoring in chemistry and biochemistry, cellular, and molecular biology, and Nathan Stebbins, a junior majoring in biochemistry, cellular, and molecular biology, are among 12 undergraduate students from universities across the country who were selected for the [Transforming Undergraduate Biology Education: Mobilizing the Community for Change](#) conference organized by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Lockhart and Stebbins were nominated by the National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis (NIMBioS), located on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, campus after both had participated in a NIMBioS-sponsored meeting on how to improve the quality of undergraduate biology education. These meetings or “mini-conversations,” held at 25 colleges and universities around the nation during the spring semester, were organized by the AAAS with support from the National Science Foundation Division of Undergraduate Education and the Directorate for Biological Sciences. The results of the mini-conversations will be discussed at the conference.

Conference attendees will also include university faculty, administrators, students, and other stakeholders on the future of undergraduate biology education. The conference aims to serve as a catalyst for launching a long-term initiative to transform undergraduate biology education nationwide.

In his application to attend the conference, Lockhart, of Kingsport, Tenn., said he would like undergraduate biology to be tailored more toward students interested in careers in biological research, with early research and training opportunities. Lockhart said the current curriculum focuses too heavily on students interested in health careers.

Stebbins, of Knoxville, Tenn., advocated teaching a more integrated biology curriculum that emphasizes graduate-led, small group problem-based learning along with traditional lecture classes.

The National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis (NIMBioS) brings together researchers from around the world to collaborate across disciplinary boundaries to investigate solutions to basic and applied problems in the life sciences. NIMBioS is funded by the National Science Foundation in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with additional support from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.