

Center for Freshwater Research and Education

Students and Staff win awards at American Fisheries Society meeting!

Submitted by Ashley Moerke, Director of Center for Freshwater Research and Education

March 13 - I realize that this has been a difficult and exhausting week, but I wanted to share a little uplifting news. Our students are awesome! This week, 14 Fisheries & Wildlife students, two faculty and five CFRE staff attended the Michigan American Fisheries Society meeting https://www.instagram.com/lssu_cfere/?hl=en in Mount Pleasant. In addition to LSSU, NMU, MTU, CMU, GVSU and many state agency folks were all represented. We had a number of impressive highlights that continue to build a strong reputation for LSSU.

First, we had 6 students present their undergraduate research and **Nicole Vellequette received best Student Poster Award** and **Evan Andrus received the runner-up** <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9zODb0Bvdj/>. It is important to note that this award was for both graduate students and undergraduates, and LSSU swept this category!

Second, **Derek Hartline was awarded a competitive grant to attend a Larval Fish ID workshop** the day prior to the meeting. He was the only student recipient and he was recognized in front of all of the meeting attendees.

Third, **I was awarded the Justin W. Leonard Award of Excellence**

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B91qzwnBpnH/>, which "recognizes outstanding professional competence and achievement of a professional employed in the field of fisheries or aquatic biology in Michigan". This is an annual award for fisheries professionals and it is an honor that I did not expect. It is one of the highlights of my career in fisheries and aquatic sciences. *Editors note:* Dr. Kevin Kupuscinski later said: Dr. Moerke's award was a once-in-a-career type of honor.

Fourth, we had about **20 LSSU alumni** in attendance who represented universities, state, tribal, and federal government agencies, and non-governmental organizations! It was quite the Laker family (40+ Lakers in attendance) and a wonderful professional networking opportunity for our students. Our students were incredibly professional and were fantastic ambassadors of LSSU. I heard conversations about graduate school, employment offers, and many scientific discussions. I believe it is an experience that will have helped shape career paths for a number of them.

Most importantly, all of this was done while students were practicing good hygiene techniques to stay healthy. They are all now pros at greeting with the elbow tap!

Thank you!
Ashley