100 BC3 students to present research findings to public

STEM poster session to be “exciting for community,” professor says

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Dr. Melinda S. Ripper, far left, a STEM professor at Butler County Community College, works Tuesday, April 24, 2018, in BC3’s Science and Technology Building with sophomores Darienne Yates, of Slippery Rock; Kelly Kabay, of Butler; and Joshua Fischer, of Freeport; on a poster project regarding berberine, a known natural anti-microbial agent found in plants.

(Butler, PA) Nearly 100 Butler County Community College students on Tuesday will discuss with the public their findings from research projects in courses ranging from biology and chemistry to manufacturing technology and metrology during the sixth STEM Division poster session, which for the first time in 2018 will also include presentations from the college’s presidential scholars program.

The poster session, scheduled for 12:45 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the lobby of Succop Theater on BC3’s main campus in Butler Township, will be “exciting for the community,” said Dr. Melinda S.

Ripper, a STEM professor who teaches organic chemistry and who has coordinated the presentations since 2013.

“The community invests in this college, and they invest in these students,” Ripper said. “They have the opportunity to see just how much these students have learned, and how well prepared they are, to leave this campus and go to industry or go to a four-year campus to continue their education. They get to see their investment.”

Students completing courses in biology, genetics, geology, microbiology, modern instrumental methods in chemical analysis and in organic chemistry will give visitors five- to 10-minute talks on their projects using scientific posters, a standard practice at research conferences, Ripper said.

BC3’s presidential scholars, and those in the manufacturing with advanced technology, and measurement science-metrology programs, will also discuss their research with the public, said Karen Fair, an administrator in BC3’s STEM Division.

“We want to give students this capstone experience in which they apply everything that they have learned in the past two years,” Ripper said. “Their individual projects took weeks to months to complete. It will also give them experience in oral presentation of their findings and sharing their knowledge.”

BC3 students will be stationed near their posters and discuss their project with those who ask for more information, Ripper said.

Ripper expects 30 poster stations. Two to four students will be stationed at each poster site.

Visitors will not only learn about the research findings, but also “how well-prepared and how articulate our students are, and their understanding of science or technology,” Ripper said.

The poster session is open to the public. Refreshments will be provided.