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- PRESENTATIONS -

Chalk Talks showcase math, science research

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Chalk Talks, designed for students involved in undergraduate research, are an up-and-coming activity for College of Natural Science and Mathematics students

Chemistry Professor Patrick Desrochers, one of the founders of Chalk Talks, said these presentations are beneficial to the college.

"We hear what everyone in the college is doing," he said. "I know all kinds of research my faculty are doing, as well as the faculty in the entire college."

Desrochers said discussion for creating Chalk Talks began in spring 1996. He and other faculty members wanted to find an informal way for students to get up and talk about the research they were doing.

"We put our students up to it. I think at the first Chalk Talk, there were eight people there," Desrochers said "Now we have 30 people every time – 15 faculty and 15 students."

Students are asked to draw diagrams and to refrain from using field jargon during the presentations.

"It forces them to stop and think about how to make it easier to understand." Desrochers said.

Senior Coleman Little said the Chalk Talk experiences have helped him become a better public speaker and learn more about his research.

"The main thing is you get experience talking in front of people who have no idea what your are talking about," Little said. "Sometimes you might get asked a question that could direct your research in a newer, better direction. You also get very familiar with your research and it points out areas where you need improvement."

Little is a biology major doing research on the prickle development in the genus rubus (blackberries and raspberries).

All of the departments in the college are asked to participate in the Chalk Talks.

Desrochers said: "What an impression you can make on someone when you can talk about something that you've worked so hard on. to really be able to explain it – draw diagrams, break it down."

The next scheduled Chalk Talks are at x-period Thursday in Laney room 101 and April 14 in the Math-Computer Science Building room 328.