Announcement: Summer REU position in plant disease ecology - University of Florida

The Flory Lab (www.florylab.com) at the University of Florida (UF) in Gainesville, FL is seeking an undergraduate for a Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) position for summer 2026. This position is part of a larger research project funded by the NIFA/NSF/NIH Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Disease program aimed at understanding the mechanisms of pathogen spillover across ecosystem boundaries mediated by an invasive grass. With the help of mentors, the REU student will develop an independent project, acquiring skills in question formulation, experimental design and execution, data analysis, and science communication. Experiments for this project may involve inoculating invasive, native, and/or crop plants with a fungal pathogen to test possible causal relationships observed in the field. The REU student will work closely with Jason Sckrabulis, a postdoc in the Flory lab, and Luke Flory, one of the project principal investigators, and will interact with other UF researchers involved in the project. Previous REU projects in the lab were very successful, leading to publication (REU participant bolded):

- **Benitez L.**, A.E. Kendig, A. Adhikari, K. Clay, P.F. Harmon, R. Holt, E. Goss, and S.L. Flory. 2022. Invasive grass litter suppresses a native grass species and promotes disease. *Ecosphere*. https://doi.org/10.1002/ecs2.3907

- Kendig A.E., **V.J. Svahnström**, A. Adhikari, P.F. Harmon, and S.L. Flory. 2021. Emerging fungal pathogen of an invasive grass: Implications for competition with native plant species. *PloS One*. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237894

Applicants must be enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program with an anticipated graduation date after September 2026 and must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (including possessions/territories). The ideal candidate will be interested in pursuing a graduate degree or career in ecology, evolution, environmental science, or biology following graduation. Previous experience in plant disease ecology is not required.

The REU position is 10 weeks in duration during summer 2026 with a flexible start date and a total stipend of $5100. Transportation and housing are not included.

To apply, send the following to Jason Sckrabulis at jason.sckrabulis@gmail.com (if possible combined as a single Word or PDF file):

1. A brief cover letter outlining your relevant experience, interest in the position, and career goals (maximum one page, single spaced)
2. A resume or CV
3. Undergraduate transcript (official or unofficial)
4. Contact information for two references (faculty members are preferred)

Please email Jason with any questions. Review of applications will begin immediately, with a final submission date of January 15, 2026, with an offer being made by February 15, 2026.