EXPERIENCE SUMMARY NARRATIVE
2016 ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA’S 103rd ANNUAL MEETING
SAMANTHA E. GIGLIOTTI
BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT

From August 6th through August 12th, 2016, I attended the Ecological Society of America’s (ESA) 101st annual meeting in Fort Lauderdale, Florida at the Fort Lauderdale Convention Center. This year’s ESA conference was entitled Novel Ecosystems in the Anthropocene. Each year ESA holds one of the largest ecological conferences in the world and it includes ecologists and students from all over the globe. This year’s meeting included plenary sessions, symposia, organized oral sessions, organized poster sessions, contributed oral sessions, workshops, lightning talks, field trips, etc. Some of the major topics covered were: Agriculture, Aquatic Ecology, Behavior, Biodiversity, Biogeochemistry, Biological Control, Climate Change, Community Disturbance and Recovery, Competition, Conservation Management, Detritus and Decomposition, Ecosystem Function, Dispersal, Disease and Epidemiology, Ecosystem Management, Ecosystem Services Assessment, Environmental Gradients, Estuarine, Evolution, Food Webs, Invasion: Dynamics and Population Processes, Microbial Ecology, Modeling, Paleoecology, Physiological Ecology, Pollination, Predation and Predator Prey Interactions, Soil Ecology, Wetlands, etc.

Most of the sessions I attended were organized oral sessions, organized poster sessions, contributed oral sessions, and workshops that focused on research that was applicable to BIO202 (Ecology) and BIO127 (Biology of Environmental Concerns). In addition to these sessions I was afforded the opportunity to participate in the Zoo Miami: Behind the Scenes field trip. The Zoo Miami field trip was two part: the first part was a guided hike and introduction to the pine rocklands ecosystem. This ecosystem is interesting because it can only be found in Florida within the continental U.S., otherwise this ecosystem is endemic to the Caribbean. This ecosystem is also home to many threatened and endangered species and as well as many invasive species. The second part of this trip was a guided tour of the zoo itself and we got to see behind the scenes: such as zoo animal diet preparation, conservation efforts, etc. We even got to feed the Giraffes. This trip was unbelievably valuable because I had the opportunity to learn about many new species, and these species will now be added or have already been added to many of my powerpoints. In addition, I got to interact with scientists from Germany, Montreal, and South America. We chatted about research, careers, flora, fauna, etc.

Besides the amazing sessions attended I also participated in several ways. I was a presider over the afternoon Global Climate Change session where I introduced presenters and made sure the afternoon schedule was maintained. I also was a judge for student talks (Buell student award). I attended five talks and judged the students on their research. Lastly, I was a presenter as well. Tuesday evening as part of the organized poster presentations, I presented the work of CCM faculty and students on Student driven monitoring and assessment of the anthropocentric effects
on the Millbrook watershed. Some highlights of this was meeting several students from the state of NJ now at other institutions, meeting faculty from nearby institutions (Rutgers, Montclair, etc.), and discussing water limitation in Antigua with a professor from a medical college within that island.

Overall the ESA conference was a great professional development experience. It provided me with many new ideas and examples. The knowledge I gained over the past week was incredible. I have brushed up on many skills and techniques while learning about new research around the world. My hopes are to introduce new skills/techniques and acquired knowledge in the classroom and field. I hope to continue to attend this conference annually to further my professional development.