

BHC student Elijah Davis of Kewanee found himself looking for his next challenge after discovering his initial major was not a good fit.

Getting started

Davis began his academic career at a university before making the change.



He decided Black Hawk College was where he was going to find his next adventure. That is when he found out about a research opportunity during a class with Isaac Stewart, assistant professor of biology. The next semester, he enrolled in Biology 295.

"The research course provides a really neat opportunity for students who get involved in it to go above and beyond," Stewart said.

What is the project?

The research project focuses on different types of beetles found in two locations in Illinois. It is funded by the Illinois Audubon Society, a non-profit organization focusing on conservation.



"I was surprised with Black Hawk and this project because this is just so independent. I don't think there are too many community colleges that let you design your research," Elijah said.

"When I plan to transfer to the University of Illinois, I feel like I will have an advantage," he said. "I will know how to begin a research project, know how to get started, and be able to think of it in ways that maybe others who don't have the experience in research."

Black Hawk College is working hard to give its students hands-on experience in the fields that interest them. The goal is to give them a great start in their academic and professional careers.

"I think it is crucial at this early stage in the education experience to allow students to have the opportunity to get their feet wet, to do the thing that they may or may not be interested in doing," Stewart added, "It's more than bugs, it's about giving students the opportunity to ask more scientific questions."

Looking to the future

The focus now shifts to the future of the project. With Davis set to graduate in May, the two are looking for other students interested in continuing the project.



"We are at a stage now where we want to take it to the next level. There is a lot of room for growth," Stewart said.

After Davis and Stewart analyzed the initial data collected, they discovered there were around the same amount of different species at each location. However, each location is home to unique types of species.

Stewart said the goal is to continue the success Davis has had with the project. Hopefully, this will allow other students to find a passion in the research field.

Interested in learning more about how you can get involved? Contact Isaac Stewart at 309-854-1832 or by [email](#).

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