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Caryn Vaughn

Caryn Vaughn understands why mussels are important to the earth, and that's one reason why the zoology faculty member is important to OU.

Vaughn has extensively researched freshwater mussels, of which 70 percent of the North American species are threatened. Her work leads to greater understanding about aquatic systems, the domino effect of species decline on ecosystems, and possible ways to save this threatened group.



"Mussels are keystone species in many rivers and their catastrophic decline may lead to the decline of other faunas and the alteration of river ecosystem processes," Vaughn says. "Our results will provide important conservation information."

Vaughn, who also directs the Oklahoma Biological Survey, excels in teaching, creativity, and service - thinking innovatively, powerfully conveying the adventure of exploring science, exciting students with her ideas, and, in turn, listening

to their views.

All these accomplishments have earned her a prestigious appointment as a President's Associates Presidential Professor, given only to faculty who exemplify the ideals of a scholar, researcher, and teacher. President's Associates sponsor more than 30 of these special professorships.

Vaughn's work has been featured on the cover of the journal *Freshwater Biology*, and research sponsors include the National Science Foundation and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. On-campus research is conducted at OU's aquatic research facility on south campus, but she and students regularly travel to the Kiamichi River in southeastern Oklahoma and the Ouachita Uplands of eastern Oklahoma and western Arkansas.

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Von Staff

**Director of Development
OU Cancer Institute**