

From the Guest Editor

For about the past decade or so, a handful of directors of undergraduate research programs around the country (mostly at larger schools and research universities) have seen each other two or three times a year at one event or another. We formed a loose-knit, very friendly community. We borrowed ideas from each other, compared budgets, talked about reporting structures, etc. In the last few years we were aware that more and more schools, and schools of different types, were developing undergraduate research programs and we learned that the directors of these new programs were looking for advice. Many times these directors were faculty with partial release from teaching. Sometimes they were located in science departments, sometimes more centrally. We began to discuss the desirability of some sort of national professional organization where we could more formally (and more visibly for those just getting started) share ideas and practices with each other.

To make a long story short, we formed a Division within CUR, the Undergraduate Research Program Directors (URPD) Division, to serve such a purpose. At the last CUR Conference at DePauw University, we made ourselves visible, and as a result we met a large number of other directors, many just getting started, who were looking for the dialogue and sharing we had imagined for several years. CUR has had to adjust to our presence a bit. Historically, most of CUR's membership has come from faculty in science disciplines at small, undergraduate colleges. From the start, the URPDs wanted to be very inclusive: of school types, of disciplines, of approaches to undergraduate research, and of program structure. Some of us are faculty, some are full-time administrators. So far, we have so much to learn from each other that none of these differences really matter. We all approach the challenge of developing an undergraduate research program in slightly different ways, but we have a lot in common as well, and we have a lot to offer each other.

As you will see from several of the articles in this edition of the CUR Quarterly, there are programs all over the country, at vastly different types of schools, that are just getting up and running. There is a tremendous amount of creativity going into the development of these programs. Although this creativity can lead to some interesting new approaches, there is also a certain amount of "reinventing the wheel" that is taking place. It is the hope of those of us involved in the URPD Division that we can preserve the creativity at the same

time that we increase productivity by sharing ideas and best practices with one another as our fledgling profession starts to gel.

While those of us who have been "in the business" for awhile have a lot of experience to share, there are a number of issues that are still challenging on most campuses. One is the inclusion of all disciplines in the activity of undergraduate research. The lab sciences in many ways provide the easiest form of scholarship for the integration of undergraduate researchers. Disciplines with a more solitary mode of scholarship, like the humanities, sometimes require a different approach, or the development of new kinds of projects. Fortunately, there are an increasing number of successful models to be shared regarding the inclusion of all disciplines. For the past two years, CUR has hosted an Institute, *Mentorship, Collaboration & Undergraduate Research in the Social Sciences & Humanities*, at which discussion of these models has taken place. Another big area for development in our field is assessment. Though a number of assessments have taken place, and more are currently underway, most of our institutions require that we document the value and outcomes of undergraduate research experiences for our students in order to justify continued funding. As a community we are working to develop instruments that can be used in a variety of settings to document the value of research for our students.

Because CUR conferences occur just every other year, much of the networking among directors must take place electronically. Members of CUR can join the CUR list-serve on which there are sometimes lively discussions about a variety of topics. For focused discussions more specifically relevant to undergraduate research program directors, there is another list-serve, hosted by the Network of Directors of Undergraduate Research Experiences (NDURE). To subscribe, go to www.ndure.org and look for directions near the bottom of the page. The NDURE website also has the results of surveys about undergraduate research programs that might be of interest and that are discussed in Mary Crowe and Karl Sienerth's article about budgets.

In addition to the bi-annual CUR conferences, there are other opportunities for networking and sharing among directors. One is the CUR Institute, *Initiating and Sustaining Undergraduate Research Programs*, which will take place next May at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. More information can be found on the CUR website: www.cur.org. Another opportunity for networking is at the National

Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) which hosts a conference each spring for about 2,000 undergraduates presenting research and creative work in all disciplines. NCUR includes FAN (Faculty and Administrator Network) sessions at its conference each year where faculty and administrators share best practices. The next NCUR is scheduled for April 12 – 14, 2007, at Dominican University in San Rafael, California. More information about NCUR can be found at its website: www.ncur.org.

I have recently moved and taken a new job. For eight years I directed the Undergraduate Research Office at Carnegie Mellon University. I always said I had the best job on campus. I learned so much from students about fascinating research in so many disciplines from robotics to performance art. It was an exceptionally stimulating and inspirational experience. I am now the Director of the Center for Academic and Professional Success at Baldwin-Wallace College. This new position is allowing me to learn about a new set of issues in undergraduate education and get my head around some different challenges. Though I do not have direct responsibility for undergraduate research (called Faculty-Student Collaborative Scholarship), I am involved in discussions about the further development of the program here which is teaching me a great deal about the different circumstances and challenges of making a program work at a very different type of institution. As my father has always said, "never a dull moment."



Janet Stocks

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UPCOMING CUR Institutes

Initiating and Sustaining Undergraduate Research Programs

This institute will be held

May 23-25, 2007

at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The purpose of the institute is to provide new directors of undergraduate research programs the means to develop and effectively administer their programs and to help seasoned directors disseminate best practices and further build and improve their programs.

This institute has the following goals:

- To provide models of effective UR Programs
- To equip UR Program directors with a "tool-kit" of essential items needed for running an undergraduate research program
- To provide access to resources that are available for directors for continuous development of their undergraduate research programs
- To provide UR Program directors with "mentors" who are willing to provide advice after the institute ends
- To further develop a network of directors that will extend beyond the dates of the workshops
- To share with directors a variety of campus models that include broad disciplinary scope and focus, and work with students at different stages of their academic careers.

Please visit <http://www.cur.org/institutes.html> for updates on this Institute.