

Final Plenary, CUR/ISSOTL Pre-Conference, October 19, 2010
Bill Campell, President Elect, Council on Undergraduate Research
wm.e.campbell@uwrf.edu

First, I bring you greetings from Nancy Hensel, CUR's Executive Officer. Nancy was one of this meeting's co-planners, along with Alan, Mick, CUR President Beth Paul, and me, and she regrets that a previously-scheduled conflicting event prevents her attendance. Beth Paul, who is the relatively new Provost at Stetson University, sends her regrets as well. Her institutional responsibilities would not allow a trip to Liverpool. I'm the understudy, very happy to be here.

The Council on Undergraduate Research has been the national organization for undergraduate research in the US since 1979. As Tom Wenzel told us in his keynote this morning, the organization was started by a small group of chemists from small, liberal arts colleges who were doing cutting-edge research with undergraduates. They were frustrated at the general lack of recognition for their work, and by the dearth of federal funding available to researchers working with undergraduates at primarily undergraduate institutions. Those early CUR members helped NSF and other funding agencies create funding programs to support undergraduate research.

And they grew the organization, dramatically. Today, CUR has more than 6,000 individual members and nearly 600 institutional members—some of whom have opted for our new enhanced institutional membership, which **allows** all of their faculty as individual members. A handful of university systems, e.g. University of Wisconsin and the California State University System, have enrolled all of their constituent institutions in CUR. Chemists started the organization and the Chemistry Division is still CUR's largest **division**, but we also have divisions for Biology, Physics, Math/Computer Science, Geosciences, Psychology, Social Sciences, Undergraduate Research Program Directors, Arts & Humanities, and (most recently) Health Sciences. Our institutional members include small liberal arts colleges, regional comprehensive universities, research universities, and community colleges.

CUR offers its members a wide range of services, including

- *Conferences*: CUR Dialogues, a conference designed to bring faculty and administrators together with funding agencies in Washington, DC, each February; and the CUR National Conference every other summer. In June, 2012, the College of New Jersey will host the National Conference.
- *Posters on the Hill*, a celebration of undergraduate research in Washington, DC, each April.
- *Consultations*. CUR sends teams of consultants to member institutions to perform reviews of undergraduate research and other academic programs.
- *Publications*. CUR Quarterly, our paper and online journal, publishes current research on undergraduate research and related topics. A series of monographs and edited volumes report to the academic community research on issues important to higher education, e.g. broadening participation in undergraduate

research, the impact of undergraduate research on student learning, and developing and sustaining research-intensive curricula.

- *Governmental relations* with the help of Washington Partners, a Washington group experienced in advocating for higher education.
- *CUR Institutes*, intensive three-day workshops for faculty and administrators devoted to topics such as creating, expanding, and sustaining undergraduate research programs; beginning research programs in the natural sciences at undergraduate institutions; undergraduate research programs in the social sciences and humanities; building undergraduate research programs at community and two-year colleges; and grant proposal-writing.
- *The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)*, where more than 2,000 undergraduates present their research during a three-day conference each April. Next April, NCUR will be at Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York.

Many faculty, including Tom Wenzel, recruit students into their research programs to help produce and disseminate new knowledge. Others, including many of us here today for a conference devoted to the scholarship of teaching and learning conference, came to undergraduate research because it provides an incredibly powerful and unparalleled stimulus to student learning. Some ask if CUR's aim is to foster faculty members' research agendas or to help students learn. The answer, of course, is both. They are not mutually exclusive; each aim supports the other. Undergraduate researchers develop their own skills and knowledge and contribute to cutting-edge research at the same time.

CUR is committed to becoming an international organization. Our goal is to be the international voice for undergraduate research. We have **four** Canadian **institutional** members, as well as institutional members in the Bahamas and Dubai. We have offered an institute in Canada. We co-sponsored this pre-conference at ISSOTL, and I am pleased to see so many CUR members from the US and elsewhere participating. We are very interested in working with ISSOTL on offering a pre-conference at next year's meeting in Milwaukee.

Alan asked each of us to write down what we would do after this conference to foster the growth of undergraduate research at our own institutions and in our own countries. My commitment is to report to CUR's membership on this meeting, to advocate for continuing our international efforts in CUR's Executive Board, and to work with National Executive **Officer** Nancy Hensel and ISSOTL in planning a pre-conference meeting devoted to undergraduate research next October in Milwaukee.