



Social Sciences Division Newsletter Spr2018

A Publication of a Division
of the Council on Undergraduate Research

734 15th St NW, Suite 850 * Washington, DC 20005
Tel: 202/783-4810 * cur@cur.org * www.cur.org
Copyright © 2018 Council on Undergraduate Research

Welcome from the Chair



I am delighted to share with you the Spring 2018 *Social Sciences Division Newsletter*. This is my first communication as chair of the division, after having been elected in June.

By way of an introduction: I am an associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM), have been a Councilor for the Social Sciences Division (SSD) since 2012, and am a member of the CUR Advocacy Committee. While in CUR, I have been involved in CUR Dialogues, met with Congressional Senators and Representatives from Arkansas, have participated in various CUR-sponsored panels and mentored students who presented at successive NCUR events and/or the 2016 World Congress in Doha, Qatar. In fact, my mentoring of students is what attracted me to CUR in the first place; over the years, I have mentored 96 students who have presented papers including original research at 31 state, national and/or international conferences (including Berlin, Germany, San Juan, Puerto Rico and Doha, Qatar).

I am pleased to lead the Social Sciences Division and hope to encourage all of you to take advantage of the many opportunities afforded you by CUR. In the capacity, it is my pleasure to

welcome our newest Councilors, April Johnson, James Scott, Tracy Sikorski, and Lisa Theo. But we also say goodbye to long-time Councilor Rebecca Hatch, who made significant contributions to CUR and the SSD and will be missed. Please read their bio info below to see who is working hard to serve your interests!

In this edition you'll find valuable information on opportunities for students and faculty, along with new ways to connect and advocate within and beyond CUR. For example, in collaboration with Washington Partners, our advocacy consultants, the *CUR Advocacy ToolKit 2017* was developed to help faculty-administrators advance their advocacy efforts. Let me know if you are interested in obtaining the tool kit to start advocating locally and nationally. It's time to get involved and have your voice heard in defense of undergraduate research!

I hope to hear from you with any thoughts and ideas you have. I further encourage your connection with other CUR members nationally, by logging into [Log in to CUR Community](#).

Please reach out, if there are initiatives or information you are interested in having the division consider, or would like additional information on CUR advocacy. Even if you just have a question, please contact me at strong@uamont.edu.

Carol Strong, Division Chair

New Councilor Profiles

The Social Sciences Division is pleased to have welcomed Dr. April Johnson, Dr. James Scott, Dr. Tracy Sikorski and Dr. Lisa Theo into our ranks.



Dr. April Johnson is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Kennesaw State University. She received a Ph.D. in Political Science from Stony Brook University in 2014 and a M.S. in Experimental Psychology from Georgia Southern University in 2008. She regularly teaches courses on American Government, Research Methods, Parties and Interest Groups, Mass Media, Campaigns and Elections, and Political Psychology.

Dr. Johnson's research primarily focuses on the application of psychological theories to American political behavior. Her current work examines the role of political and social contexts in shaping cognitive processes and participatory behavior. Her research has been published in *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, *Political Studies*, *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law*, and *Journal of Ideology*.

Dr. Johnson's work in the area of undergraduate research primarily involves fostering original student research projects each semester in her Political Science Research Methods course. Students in this course develop their ideas, compile and analyze quantitative data, and submit their projects for peer-review. At present, several student projects have been published in the *Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research*.



Dr. James Scott is Herman Brown Chair and Professor of Political Science at Texas Christian University, and he specializes in foreign policy analysis and international relations. He is the author of 7 books and more than 70 articles, book chapters, review essays, and other publications. He has been conference organizer and president of both the International Studies Association's Foreign Policy Analysis section and the ISA's Midwest region. He has also been a two-time winner of the ISA-Midwest's Klingberg Award for Outstanding Faculty Paper. Since 1996 he has received over two dozen awards from students and peers for teaching, research, and research mentoring. He directed the Democracy Interdependence and World Politics Summer Research Program, a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates, from 2005-2014. He is currently co-editor of *Political Research Quarterly*. In 2012, he received the Quincy Wright Distinguished Scholar Award from the International Studies Association-Midwest for outstanding scholarship and service.



Tracy Sikorski is the Director of the Office of Social Science Research. She has a M.Ed. in Policy Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago and is currently pursuing her PhD in Educational Psychology. Her research interest includes outcomes associated with student participation in undergraduate research

programs, specifically those associated with the social sciences. In her role as Director, she provides executive level budgetary, reporting, financial, administrative, and organizational operations for the office. As the Director of a research office, Tracy has direct contact with students and faculty engaged in undergraduate research and will be a part of the team for the new Engaged Humanities Initiative, a humanities-based research program funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation.



Dr. Lisa Theo is a Senior Lecturer in Geography and the Director of the Office of Student Research and Creative Activity at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Theo and her husband Christos Theo have been married 32 years and have three adult sons. While the children were young, she returned to school earning her Bachelors of Science in Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC), and her Masters of Science in Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison). She was the first person in her family to earn a college degree.

Theo has held a number of public service positions and started two home businesses during her more than 35 years in the workforce. She has managed women's clothing stores, managed a U.S. Senate campaign, served as a legislative aide to a state senator, worked in food service, ran a home childcare business, and had a home business designing and constructing original wedding gowns and bridal accessories. She has taught at the university level since 1999, first at UW-Madison as a graduate student, then at UWEC before joining the Geography and Geology Department at the

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) in 2007.

Theo has mentored over 250 students on undergraduate research projects in her 17+ years of teaching. Additionally, she requires field trips with every upper division course she teaches. Trips include: The Ethnic Neighborhoods of New York City, The Texas-Mexico Borderlands, Mormon Utah and Las Vegas, San Francisco and the Wine Country, The Mississippi Delta, and Urban Paris. Theo's research concentrates on race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and land use conflicts at the urban/rural fringe. Her dissertation research investigated community change in Wisconsin's Northwoods (1930-2000).

2018 SSD Student Travel Awards

Every year, the Social Sciences Division of CUR offers a limited number of Student Travel Awards for undergraduate students to travel to and present at discipline specific conferences. This year's recipients are as follows:

- Zachery Birdsong – University of Arkansas at Monticello
- Malik Handoush – Florida Atlantic
- Jillian Christensen – Idaho State
- Max Ungerman – Westminster College
- Kailey Charles – College of Charleston
- Jordan Winczewski – University of Portland
- Amanda Burton – George Mason University
- Joel Earlywine – Pacific Lutheran
- Samuel Mungure – Augsburg
- Brittany Blanchard – Virginia Commonwealth

Congratulations to this year's recipients. Please note that all 2018 travel funds have been allocated.

Upcoming CUR Events

National Conference on Undergraduate Research

University of Central Oklahoma
April 4-7, 2018



The University of Central Oklahoma warmly invites you to our place to make connections with innovative undergraduate research, new friends, and new places to broaden your perspective. We call the growing Oklahoma City metro home, where opportunity is as wide open as the plains on which this great city was built. On campus, you'll encounter a welcoming community surrounded by restaurants, shopping and entertainment in Edmond, Oklahoma's charming downtown. Just a few minutes away, you can explore Oklahoma's Native American roots and cowboy heritage. Find adventure at the Oklahoma City Boathouse district, an official U.S. Olympic and Paralympic training site and home to UCO's CHK|Central Boathouse. Experience downtown OKC's thriving culture and cuisine scene.

2018 Posters on the Hill

Washington D.C., April 17-18, 2018



Each year, 60 top student research projects are selected out of hundreds of applications. Accompanied by their faculty mentors, students have the opportunity to present their research on Capitol Hill, attend field trips to important institutions in the DC area, and participate in

an orientation and advocacy training session to prepare for their congressional visits.

CUR Conference 2018

Crystal City, VA
July 1-3, 2018



CUR will host its 18th National Conference, "Creating Collaborative Connections in and through Undergraduate Research," at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, VA.

This conference will feature the following nationally recognized keynote speakers who will provide insight into current national/global trends and related fields of interest:

- Jose Antonio Bowen – president Goucher College.
- Freeman A. Hrabowski III – president, University of Maryland-Baltimore County.
- David Lopatto – director of the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Grinnell College.
- Robin Wright – director, Division of Undergraduate Education, National Science Foundation.

For more information about the conference, or to submit a proposal, please visit the following website:

https://www.cur.org/conferences_and_events/cur_biennial_conference_2018/.

Be sure to register soon. The early bird rate ends March 29, 2018.