THOTH: A Publication of the Education Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research

Message from Division Chair

So many great things on the horizon as we get closer to meeting again in person for the first time in two years. Please be sure to look at the opportunities to meet virtually (Annual Business meeting, June 15-16) and face to face in the inaugural ConnectUR, offering a virtual platform (June 23-24) and onsite in Washington DC on June 27-29. I am glad to be ending my term as division chair on such an uplifting opportunity, to be able to see everyone again after such a long time. In Education, probably more than any discipline, we were put in the situation during the pandemic to be privy to our own fears and anxiety, as well as those of the students who we teach, and the teachers in the field where we support. No one was more of a “front line worker” than the teachers who juggled between virtual, hybrid and face-to-face while putting themselves at risk of exposure. Now to be able to learn so much about how people can teach in so many different modalities, many all at the same time, has offered so much data! Let the research begin! Thanks to everyone in the Education Division who really made a difference in how we view research in education, and a special thank you to all the councilors who supported me during my tenure. I leave you in good hands, and look forward to the great work this division will continue to promote.

Best,
Kymberly

Upcoming CUR Events

SPUR: All Issues and Submission Guidelines
Expanding UGR in Education Through Outreach to Professional Organizations
Deborah L. Thompson, Faculty Emeritus, The College of New Jersey

As professionals, we know many of our proposals, worthy though they may be, are not always accepted for presenting at professional conferences such as American Educational Research Association (AERA), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). The same can be said for undergraduate researchers. Only a finite number of students are chosen to present at NCUR and Posters on the Hill (POH), which leaves other students without outlets to present their research. How do we encourage student researchers who do not get accepted at these two CUR-sponsored research venues? What recourse do the students who were not accepted have? The answer is through active outreach to our professional organizations, such as those named above or those in the chart that accompanies this article.

In response to a charge from the CUR National Office, I surveyed my fellow Education Division Councilors about how they advocated for UGR outside of CUR. Their answers reflected their commitment to giving undergraduates and their research visibility in other venues: presentations at national and international conferences of professional organizations such as AERA, ATE, AMTE, LDA, and NAME; presentations at regional divisions of AERA such as Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA); and, college-wide student presentation days such as The College of New Jersey’s Celebration of Student Achievement (COSA) and the University of Northern Arizona’s College of Education’s Educate2Act.

Several councilors have invited undergraduates to co-author articles with them. Inviting undergraduates to co-author with you is an excellent way to strengthen and amplify student researchers’ voices. is to invite them to co-author articles, as several of the division councilors have done. We know that undergraduate research augments thinking in fundamental ways. Undergraduate research enhances and enriches students’ cognitive abilities to become better writers, thinkers, and speakers. Become an advocate for undergraduate research within CUR and through outreach to other professional organizations in which you are active. Coauthor articles for peer-reviewed journals, local newspapers, or professional newsletters. Encourage student participation in college-wide, school-wide, or departmental undergraduate presentation days. Finally, as one councilor noted, any outreach to promote
undergraduate research aids the strong connection between it (undergraduate research) and career readiness. There is no argument that participation in research prepares undergraduates to be thoughtful individuals ready to confront and conquer current and future challenges that beset the nation and the world. By submitting students’ works to the professional conferences at which we often present whether at the national, regional/state, or local levels, we encourage students to continue their research, and we provide them with options for disseminating their research. In doing so, we also advance the mission of CUR.

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Blink and look again. . . Wonder always await!

Short Stories from OrchardDelights by NotagardnerR

I finally checked the container that held the remnants of a bird’s nest that was blown out of the orange tree in my backyard orchard several days ago. The putrid odor and the absence of the mockingbirds confirmed that the chicks had died. This was a sad end to the drama of the past weeks. Mockingbird pairs battled for territory within OrchardDelights, making their cases loudly from every high place they could perch. The winners demonstrated their architectural prowess in nest building, and then settled down for nesting and shared parenting duties. Quiet reigned for them but not for me; I became the enemy, and they did not spare me from their pesky attacks. They were mistaken though; I was the enemy they could see; but the one they couldn’t see—the spring winds—blew their nest and their young chicks out of the tree.

Like rubberneckers fascinated by a highway accident, the area’s resident birds showed up for this event to look, complete with a cacophony of bird calls; not all, I imagine, with good intent. On my part, I responded only to the begging call of the young chicks, and the full alarming calls of the parents. Yet my reaction was that of disequilibrium and I fell back into the familiar: 911? 411? 311? Wildlife Hospital in my area? First responder for backyard bird accidents? Good sense, otherwise called complex thinking and at times, research thinking, took me through the problem-solving process: I was the first responder. I jumped into action with a trellised container to mimic the nest, I collected the nest materials, while fending off the distraught parent birds, and with gloved hands I carefully retrieved the babies, and replaced them in the nest and then secured the nest in the tree.

Today I discovered that the baby birds did not survive. With some guilt for not knowing what to do in this bird crisis, I wished the birds away to another territory. However, Nature - Life itself helps to correct nonsense conclusions. In my daily walk through OrchardDelights, I discovered to my great delight, that a mockingbird pair (the same pair or another) has established residence in the carambola tree and is nesting three eggs. Robert Frost’s “ A Minor Bird “ emerged loudly and clearly from my memory bank offering again its clarity of meaning: my mockingbird friends motivate a continuing learning of and engagement with the power of observation and an appreciation of all unexpected encounters of wonder.

A Minor Bird by Robert Frost:

I have wished a bird would fly away,
And not sing by my house all day;
Have clapped my hands at him from the door
When it seemed as if I could bear no more.
The fault must partly have been in me.
The bird was not to blame for his key.
And of course there must be something wrong
In wanting to silence any song
About CUR's Education Division
The Education Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research provides networking opportunities, activities, and resources to assist education administrators, faculty members, students, practitioners, and others in advancing undergraduate research.

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