

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM DIRECTORS



NewsBriefs

Upcoming Events

CUR Dialogues 2017
Renaissance and Residence
Inn Arlington Capital View
February 16-18, 2017
(Arlington, VA)

www.cur.org

Florida Undergraduate
Research Conference
February 24 -25, 2017
(Boca Raton, FL)

www.furc.org

2017 Diversity, Learning,
and Student Success
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville
March 16-18, 2017
(Jacksonville, FL)

<https://www.aacu.org/>

Southern Regional Honors
Council Conference
March 30 – April 1, 2017
(Asheville, NC)

[www.srhconline.org/
conference/](http://www.srhconline.org/conference/)

National Conference on
Undergraduate Research
Univ. of Memphis
April 6-8, 2017
(Memphis, TN)

www.cur.org

Transforming
Undergraduate Research
Culture and Curricula
April 21-23, 2017
(New Jersey City, NJ)

www.cur.org

Undergraduate Research
Program Directors
Conference 2017
Northern Arizona Univ.
June 27-29, 2017
(Flagstaff, AZ)

www.cur.org

Message from Our Chair

By: Bethany Usher, George Mason University

Since my first contact with the Council on Undergraduate Research as an attendee at an institute (we called it "grant camp"), I've been impressed by the strength of our community and the ethos of sharing great ideas. As the new chair of the Undergraduate Research Program Directors division, I'm happy to be in a position where I can advance this mission. This newsletter is written in the spirit of sharing and support. The URPD-supported Initiating and Sustaining Undergraduate Research Programs institute brings together experienced program directors with faculty, staff, and administrators who are eager to start or expand their high-impact activities. This fall's institute in Ottawa was our first international workshop, and was a success — every attendee said that they would recommend it to colleagues!

The upcoming URPD Conference, Undergraduate Research Programs: Making Connections, Reaching New Heights, exemplifies CUR's mission to support and expand undergraduate research programs. If you have a model or data you want to share, in any of our themes, please submit a proposal for a poster or an oral presentation (note that we have only one deadline — January 17 — this year for all abstracts). And if you just want to come and commune with people who are doing the same interesting work as you, please register and attend. I'm already looking forward to summer in Flagstaff — I'm packing both my iPad and my hiking shoes!

Spotlight I: *URPD Conference in Arizona's High Country* June 27-29, 2017

By: Kimberly Reiter (Stetson University), Vanessa McRae (University of Central Florida), and



Are you ready to network and learn from your colleagues? The 2017 URPD Conference (*Undergraduate Research Programs: Making Connections, Reaching New Heights*) is designed to highlight undergraduate research programs and strategies at every stage of development. Hosted by Northern Arizona University, this college town is not what you might expect in Arizona; Flagstaff is in the state's cool high country (7,000 feet) surrounded by the

largest contiguous Ponderosa pine forest with world renowned sites such as the Grand Canyon, Lowell Observatory, the red rocks of Sedona, Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, to name a few, within easy driving distance.

Conference themes include High Impact Learning Strategies, Nuts and Bolts of Undergraduate Research Administration and Budgeting, Assessment, Diversity in Research, Internationalization, and Undergraduate Research Collaborations. The deadline for abstracts and proposals is January 17 and early registration is due on April 24 with final registration by May 31. For more information, go to http://www.cur.org/conferences_and_events/ur_programs_undergraduate_research_collaborations_2017/ We hope you'll plan to "get your kicks on Route 66"!

Lessons Learned:

By: Sean Ma (University of Michigan)

As a postdoc researcher and an entrepreneur at the University of Michigan (UM), I get to identify how these two distinct realms are able to meld together to better impact our community. This experience also heavily influenced the undergraduate research (UR) assistants working with me. Not only did they have the opportunity to journey through a more traditional UR experience, in our case setting up brain imaging protocols to understand emotion processes, my students further applied what they'd learned about the scientific method onto community needs through entrepreneurial endeavors.

For me, it was a quite humbling experience to discover who really cared (or not) about my research findings. It influenced me how to ask better research questions as an academic scholar. Furthermore, through my students' engagement in this process, I've observed many of the "soft skills" sought after in industry being practiced and applied in a low-risk environment. These skills differ from the professional knowledge taught in classrooms or laboratories and are skills that promote communication, team building, active listening and empathy for others. When these essential skills are combined with human-centered design skills, an innovation cycle emerges that allows students to participate in translating research into a product or experience that benefits a particular group of people.

Armed with the strong values this experience had provided, the entrepreneurial side of me decided to scale and test a pilot program through the UROP program. What was unique about our program, in addition to the research component, was the focus on the value creation in entrepreneurship — the listen/build/test cycle that allowed students to learn from their failure and miss steps without certain economical strains that are often associated with entrepreneurship. Business development, which was the emphasis of other entrepreneurial programs, was less of a focus. This experience was further replicated and well received in a classroom curriculum entrepreneurship minor program, Innovate Blue.

From our own assessment during and after the program, there were several 'Aha!' moments we'd like to share. Students appreciated the opportunities where they were pushed out of their comfort zone to interact with professionals in fields of their expertise. This facilitated their communication skills and further sharpened their ability to ask better questions for information gathering. The data gathered further supported or rejected the project's proposed hypothesis. After all, entrepreneurship, at its core, is hypothesis driven. We've also learned that incoming students, especially first-year students, needed more one-on-one guidance on the new entrepreneurial concepts they were exposed to. For example, many didn't understand why an idea needed to be validated first rather than putting in effort and seeing if anybody cared. Many of these concepts are against classical understandings but students do get it after going through the process. Lastly, students are more motivated if they have some type of ownership in the work. It becomes more personal for them and really ignites their passion.

The assistance and guidance of my two UR assistants, Evan Jon Gennrich and Sushmitha Diraviam, was highly valuable to the execution and success of this entrepreneurship pilot program. Currently, they are continuing to further impact society through the skills and values they've learned here at UM. Sushmitha is innovating within the hospital of the University of Pennsylvania on healthcare delivery and Evan Jon is a product manager at Epic, an electronic health record company. Both are continuing to push the edge of innovation in healthcare.

For more information about the University of Michigan's Research Entrepreneurship and Biomedical Innovation Program, please visit our website : <http://bit.ly/urop2015>

Spotlight II: World Congress on Undergraduate Research (WCUR) Report

By: Suzanne Rocheleau (Drexel University)



Four continents, 11 countries, 65 educational institutions and 200+ participants: The First World Congress of Undergraduate Research held at Qatar University in Doha, Qatar, exceeded all expectations. With sandy beaches, palm trees, modern buildings and construction everywhere, Doha, Qatar is being transformed from a traditional Arab/Islamic/Bedouin culture built on an economic foundation of oil, into a modern and sophisticated metropolis that sees itself as a focal point in the Middle East.

Sponsored by Qatar University College of Arts and Sciences and its partner organizations Council on Undergraduate Research, British Conference of Undergraduate Research, and Australasian Council for Undergraduate Research, WCUR was more than a conference. As a world congress, WCUR brought together undergraduate from around the world to share their research in oral and poster sessions, as well as international champions of undergraduate research such as Maher Khelifa, Beth Ambos, Stuart Hampton-Reeves, Julio Rivera, and Angela Brew. But it was in the cross-cultural conversations about the role of women, personal freedoms, and

life goals that the congress really shined. For many of us, faculty and students, it was an opportunity to talk across culture, to question our assumptions, to put a face and name to difference and the other, and to come to a better understanding of the world we all live in. WCUR was a transformational experience, never to be forgotten.

The Second World Congress of Undergraduate Research is being planned for 2018.

URPD Updates & Accomplishments

Bethany Usher has been promoted to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education at George Mason University. The Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research, the campus model for developing more student engagement initiatives, will report to Bethany beginning in January.

Sonia Zarate from San Diego University has accepted the position of Program Officer for Undergraduate and Graduate Programs at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in the Science Education Department. Her new role began in December 2016.

Joyce Kinkead from Utah State University recently published a new book entitled *Researching Writing: An Introduction to Research Methods*. This is the first research methods textbook for students in writing studies.

The University of Missouri Office of Undergraduate Research welcomes Jennifer (Jenn) Sanders as their new Assistant Director. Jenn, who has completed three summer research programs as an undergraduate, replaces Mike Cohen who left MU for an Associate Director of Admissions for Lake Forest College in Chicago.

Texas A&M University recently appointed Sarah M. Misemer as the new Associate Director for LAUNCH: Undergraduate Research. Sarah, Associate Professor in the Department of Hispanic Studies, will serve an approximately 70%-time appointment in this new role, while continuing as Associate Director of the Glasscock Center for Humanities Research.

California State University, Sacramento, has established a Student Research Center to serve as a hub for students and faculty conducting research. The center, which is housed in the Library, offers workshops, faculty learning communities, and a newly funded grant program as well as a student research training program in the education sciences.