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Councilor's Handbook: A Guide to Leadership in CUR

Version 3 - February 2013

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Welcome and Congratulations!

Congratulations on your successful election as a Division Councilor in the Council on Undergraduate Research! The vision of CUR - to lead and to contribute to national and regional efforts to support high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship - can only be realized through the active involvement of its members. As a Councilor, you can share in the design and implementation of initiatives to achieve the organization's goals. The numerous accomplishments of CUR are in no small part due to the commitment and talents of many individual volunteers. The grassroots nature of CUR is a source of pride for CUR members, and it is the special responsibility of CUR Councilors to maintain this welcoming aspect of our organization. The dedication of CUR Councilors is essential to enhancing the vitality and effectiveness of the organization. We share a passion for undergraduate research and a desire to assist faculty and institutions in establishing and sustaining effective research programs with undergraduates. The network of Councilors, both current and past, thank you for choosing to share your time and skills to further these goals.

To assist you in preparing for your service as a CUR councilor, this brief guide will provide some background information and recommended advice from fellow councilors. While no written document can effectively capture the spirit of this dynamic organization, these guidelines and suggestions are intended to assist your transition into your new role. On behalf of all councilors and the staff of the National Office - welcome!

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ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF CUR

The general membership of CUR is organized into nine discipline-based Divisions – Arts & Humanities, Biology, Chemistry, Geosciences, Health Sciences, Mathematics & Computer Science, Physics & Astronomy, Psychology, and Social Sciences, and two multidisciplinary divisions - At-Large and Undergraduate Research Program Directors. CUR is governed by a body of councilors elected by the members of each Division. These Divisional Councilors comprise the General Council. Councilors are elected to staggered 3-year terms, with one-third of the Councilors in each Division elected each year. Typically, eight councilors are elected annually to the 24-member Divisional Council. You'll find that some councilors serve multiple three-year terms; others are involved for only one three-year term. With both experienced and new councilors comprising each Division, the continuing evolution of the organization is ensured.

Councilors are expected to attend annual business meetings held in June, where they participate in helping shape the future of CUR and undergraduate research. The structure of a typical business meeting is described below.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CUR COUNCILORS

The formal responsibilities of CUR Councilors may be summarized as follows:

1. All Councilors and Councilor nominees must be paid members of CUR (NOTE: payment may come from the individual; or as part of an institutional or enhanced membership).
2. Because a significant amount of the business of the council traditionally occurs during the annual business meeting of the council, it is essential that all Councilors attend each annual meeting. Many divisions have strict attendance policies for Councilors. New councilors should be aware that normally the cost of attendance is borne by their home institution. If requested, the National Office can send a letter to one of your campus administrators encouraging them to support your attendance at CUR meetings. CUR Councilors are expected to attend the meeting following their election and the next 3 consecutive council meetings. It is important to attend for the entire meeting and absolutely essential to do so if you are a Committee chair or Division chair.
3. The business of CUR is carried out through a variety of Division-specific and Council-wide Committees. Each Councilor participates in their Division's activities and may also actively serve on one CUR-wide Committee. Committee assignments require involvement throughout the year, although the amount of time varies from Committee to Committee and much of the work is accomplished via conference calls and through email. Some of CUR's shorter duration, more focused work is carried out by task forces that are created on as needed basis.
4. Councilors are elected because they are supporters of and leaders in promoting, mentoring and involving undergraduate students in their research, scholarship and creative activity. The council relies on Councilors to use this leadership and their many skills to achieve the objectives of the organization.

General Expectations of CUR Councilors:

- Councilors are the governing board of CUR
- Councilors set policy and create programs and workshops for the organization
- Attendance at annual business meetings and biannual Conferences (see Glossary) is essential
- Councilors provide service to their Division and to CUR-wide Committees
- Councilors also assist with conferences, institutes, and other CUR programs
- Councilors are expected to be emissaries of CUR and CUR's mission, both at their home institution and at discipline-related conferences and meetings

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Structure of a Business Meeting

A business meeting involves 2-3 days of meetings of all Councilors including the Executive Board, the Executive Officer, and selected staff members from the National Office. In years when CUR sponsors a national conference (a biennial event in even-numbered years), the business meeting precedes the national conference. Generally, the business meeting is held in the third week of June. Prior to the meeting you'll receive important announcements from the National Office as well as a "virtual meeting book" transmitted electronically. You will need to register for the conference and make your own travel arrangements. Remember, the cost of attending the business meeting is your own responsibility. Most councilors receive some or all of their support from their institutions. If requested, the National Office can help you obtain funds from your institution by writing a letter to your administration explaining the valuable role you play and the benefits that accrue to your institution.

The schedule and agenda of the business meeting will be established by the CUR President in advance. At the annual meeting the agenda is typically packed with meetings of the General Council, Divisions, CUR-wide Committees, and task forces. General council meetings are run by the President, with the Secretary recording minutes. Division meetings are run by the Division Chair. Divisions select their own chairs for two-year terms. Many divisions also select a chair-elect one to two years in advance of their term of service to allow for smoother transitions and more effective communication. Committee meetings are run by the Committee Chair or Co-Chairs. The President-Elect appoints Committee chairs in advance of the meeting. In addition to meetings, meals, breaks, and socials are scheduled so that you have an opportunity to relax and meet other councilors.

Orientation Activities for New Councilors

The CUR President-Elect meets with new Councilors at the start of a business meeting. This is an opportunity to meet fellow new Councilors and CUR officers and to learn more about the structure of the business meeting and the plans for the organization. Everyone is eager to help you get involved and participate in the business and programs of the organization.

Division Business

Much of your involvement in CUR will center on your Division. While every division has some common business and programming, such as the nomination of new Councilors, each division has its own character and its own agenda at each business meeting. For example, newer divisions may focus discussion on the recruitment of additional members. More established divisions may focus on programming for members, such as consulting services, a mentor network, or the organization of workshops or undergraduate poster sessions at disciplinary conferences. In addition to discussing discipline-specific matters at division meetings, representatives from the various CUR-wide Committees and task forces generally report on Committee business to the divisional councilors. Any division may bring an "action item" to the final session of the General Council - that is, an item which the division believes needs to be addressed by the entire Council.

CUR-Wide Committees

Each division assigns councilors to each of the CUR-wide Committees. You may have particular interests or expertise that make a certain Committee assignment appropriate for you. Be sure to let your Division Chair know of such interests and skills. Current committees include Advocacy, Constitution & Bylaws, CUR Fellows, Finance, Investments, Nominations, Nomination Vetting Committee, Posters on the Hill, National Conferences on Undergraduate Research Oversight Committee, and Program Review. A brief description of these committees appears below. Any committee may bring an action item to the final session of the General Council.

The Advocacy Committee is charged with identifying and addressing needs associated with communicating with state, local, and federal agencies. The committee also puts forward mechanisms for vetting and disseminating policy statements of the Council. In particular, the committee is focused on three goals: 1) providing advice and recommending action on policy matters, 2) gathering and distilling information that could inform CUR actions, and 3) educating members, both individual and institutional, about opportunities for action

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee reviews requests for amendments to the Constitution as a result of discussion at CUR Council and Executive Board meetings. It proposes wording and forwards amendments to the National Office, which conducts the electronic voting on the amendments among the general membership.

The CUR Fellows Task Force oversees the CUR Fellows award program, drafting criteria for the award and guidelines for its administration. The Task Force works with the CUR President and NEO to implement the award process and find funding for the awards.

The purpose of the Finance Committee is to oversee the financial aspects of CUR and to advise the Executive Committee and the EO on the operating budget for each fiscal year. It evaluates the cost-benefit ratio of programs. Significant changes in the operating budget are considered and approved by the Finance Committee.

The Investment Committee is comprised of the President, Treasurer and Executive Officer of CUR. It is charged with reviewing policies relating to and performance of CUR's investment portfolio.

The Nominations Committee solicits nominations for Councilors in each division and oversees the election of Councilors for each division.

The Nominations Vetting Committee prepares a slate of candidates for CUR elected officers (President-elect, Treasurer, and Secretary) with at least one nominee per office. It oversees the election of officers. The President and President-Elect serve for one-year terms; the Secretary and Treasurer are elected for two-year terms.

The Posters on the Hill Review Committee solicits and reviews student applications for CUR's annual Posters on the Hill celebration.

The NCUR Oversight Committee assists with recruitment, review, and assessment of potential NCUR host sites, and with the successful operation of the NCUR yearly conference.

The Program Review Committee responds to requests for reviews, develops formats for consulting activities, identifies consultants, and provides general oversight of the program. More information about Program Review may be found at:

http://www.cur.org/projects_and_services/program_review_services/

SOME ADVICE FOR NEW COUNCILORS

Before a Business Meeting

1. Download and/or print the meeting book and bring it to the business meeting
2. At a minimum, read the following sections from the meeting book: (1) Your Division's end-of-year report, (2) the minutes of the last business meeting, (3) the minutes of the mid-year Executive Board meeting, (4) the President's report, (5) the report from the Executive Officer, (6) the report of the Committee to which you have been assigned (if applicable - not all councilors are assigned to committees), (7) the business meeting agenda, and (8) any background material included for the business meeting agenda. Reading other Division and Committee reports will help to familiarize you with CUR and the current activity and initiatives of the organization.
3. Read the mid-year report of your Division and Committee (if applicable) on the CUR web site.

At the Business Meeting

1. Attend and actively participate in all meetings - general council, division, and (if applicable) your assigned committee (a given!).
2. Interact with councilors outside your division - you'll make new friends and establish connections with supportive colleagues.
3. Don't sit back and wait a year or two to get involved - volunteer your enthusiasm and expertise and share your ideas right from the start.

Throughout the Year

1. Respond to your Division Chair!! Whenever you receive a request (usually by email) for volunteers, feedback, comments, etc., help your Division Chair by responding promptly.
2. Respond to the National Office when asked for information or suggestions.
3. Keep a list of your CUR activities throughout the year and be prepared to report these activities to your Division Chair by early December and early May for the mid-year and end-of-year reports, respectively. Email messages throughout the year of CUR-related involvement are also appreciated by your Division Chair.
4. Spread the word about CUR on your campus and at your professional meetings.

5. Nominate colleagues as CUR councilors - including divisions other than your own.
6. Share CUR news and your CUR involvement with your Chair, Dean, Provost, and President and with your colleagues across campus.
7. Subscribe to CURL, the CUR email ListServe (see Glossary), to stay informed on member issues.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF NEW COUNCILORS

When held on a campus, should I stay in the dorms or in a hotel for the business meeting?

Besides the convenience and cost-effectiveness of dormitory housing, the key advantage of staying in a dorm during a business meeting is the opportunity to socialize with your fellow councilors. Gathering in a dorm lounge after dinner or an evening meeting is a typical CUR experience and a fantastic way to meet councilors and learn more about the organization. While dorm living is a challenge for most of us, those of us who have served on the Council for a number of years would highly recommend opting to stay in the dorms.

Should I bring my family to a business meeting?

The schedule of a business meeting is generally so filled that you will find little time to spend with your family. Days generally start with breakfast at 7:00 a.m. and often continue with meetings at night. The short breaks between division, Committee, and general council meetings are best spent socializing with Councilors. Meetings often run late and last minute announcements of schedule changes or impromptu gatherings to finish business are typical. It is best to focus for the short span of a business meeting on CUR business. That said, CUR has attempted to make sure that the locations of the meetings are family friendly. We welcome spouses and children and make arrangements with the hotels to secure dates in the discounted room block both before and after the meeting, should you wish to extend your stay.

What if I can't attend a business meeting?

As soon as you know that you won't be able to attend a business meeting, contact your Division Chair. Not only is it common courtesy to inform your Division Chair of your absence, it is necessary to enable the Division Chair to ensure that all Committees have divisional representation at the meeting. Recognize that many divisions have strict attendance policies - missing a meeting could jeopardize your status as a councilor and the division's willingness to allow you to stand for re-election. Following the business meeting, ask your Division Chair to send you a copy of the division's meeting minutes or read the report on the web. Find out what your responsibilities are for the coming year.

What are some other ways that I can stay involved with CUR throughout the year?

There are many ways to keep involved in CUR between business meetings! If your institution does not have a CUR liaison, volunteer to serve in this capacity. Plan to attend CUR Dialogues and/or help organize a team from your institution to attend one of CUR's many institutes on building expertise and

the involvement of undergraduate students in research, scholarship and creative activity. . Nominate a student to present his/her research results at Posters on the Hill and bring students to NCUR. Volunteer to serve as a CUR consultant or as a faculty mentor in your division. Share your *CUR Quarterly* with colleagues. Volunteer to write an article for the *CUR Quarterly*. Recruit undergraduates to sign up for the Registry of Undergraduate Researchers and encourage colleagues at graduate schools to purchase access to this directory.

Where can I find additional information on CUR?

The CUR website is a terrific resource for all aspects of the organization - start your search at <http://www.cur.org> or refer to the sitemap at <http://www.cur.org/sitemap/>. The CUR National Office (cur@cur.org) is a rich resource for you and can answer many of your questions about the organization and its Committees and programs.

CUR GLOSSARY

Affinity Groups - an informal association of CUR members with specialized interests who meet and communicate to share ideas and contribute to CUR programming. Affinity groups are external to CUR's disciplinary governance structure and open to all members regardless of division membership. Current affinity groups include Arts and Humanities Issues, Biochemistry, Canadian Issues, College and University Administration Issues, Engineering, Environmental Research, Issues for Directors of Undergraduate Research Programs, and Research University Issues.

Andreen Research Fund - an endowment for undergraduate research named in honor of CUR's founder, Brian Andreen. Proceeds of the fund are used to provide awards to CUR Fellows' institutions to support undergraduate research.

Affiliate Membership - a membership level within CUR for organizations and institutions that share in the mission of CUR but which are not colleges and universities, including corporations, foundations, and federal or state agencies. These institutions and organizations receive the same benefits as institutional members.

At-Large Division - a multidisciplinary division of CUR consisting of administrators such as presidents, provosts, vice presidents of academic affairs, deans, and directors of sponsored research, but also welcome to faculty, particularly those without associated disciplinary divisions.

Business Meeting - an annual meeting held in June for all CUR councilors, the Executive Board, the Executive Officer, and other members of the National Office to conduct the business of the organization.

CUR Conference - a biennial event held in the third or fourth week of June in even-numbered years where participants engage in workshops and attend plenary sessions devoted to faculty and institutional development to initiate, support, and sustain high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship.

CUR Dialogues - an annual gathering in the Washington, D.C. area which provides faculty development opportunities to network with government and foundation officials to learn about funding and research opportunities.

CUR Fellows Awards - a program to recognize CUR members who have demonstrated sustained excellence in research with undergraduates and achieved national recognition for their research programs. Awards are presented at the national conference every other year.

CUR Institutes - workshops for individuals and institutional teams to learn and develop strategies for strengthening research programs on their home campuses. Current institutes focus on Beginning a Research Program in the Natural Sciences, Creative Inquiry in the Arts & Humanities, Initiating and Sustaining an Undergraduate Research Program, Institutionalizing Undergraduate Research, Mentorship, Collaboration and Undergraduate Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, and Proposal Writing.

CUR Liaison - a representative of an institution who serves as an additional contact person for the National Office to disseminate information on CUR membership, meetings, and other programs.

CURL - the CUR email ListServe to which both members and non-members may subscribe. See the CUR webpage at http://www.cur.org/resources/instructions_for_cur_listserv/ for information on how to subscribe.

Executive Board (also known as EBoard)- The Executive Board of the General Council of CUR consists of the President, the Immediate Past President, the President-Elect, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Division Chairs and three Members-At-Large. The Executive Officer and the Finance Committee Chair are ex officio members of the Executive Board. The President chairs the Executive Board.

EO or Executive Officer - the principal administrator of CUR who is a professional hired for a three-year renewable term by the Executive Board. The Executive Officer is the chief employed officer of CUR, oversees the national office and its staff, and reports to the Executive Board. Additional specific duties include program management, strategic planning, program development, financial management and budgeting, public relations and government relations, outreach to collegial organizations, and publisher of CUR publications.

Membership:

For Individuals-

Individual Membership: a membership level within CUR for individuals; one's institution does not need to be an institutional member in order to have an individual CUR membership. CUR is open to anyone who supports and promotes high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship.

For Institutions-

Institutional Membership: a membership level within CUR for colleges and universities. Benefits of institutional membership include three individual memberships as well as discounts on CUR Institute Registration fees, CUR consulting services, and the undergraduate student registry, along with access to the CUR mentoring service and student eligibility to apply to Posters on the Hill.

Enhanced Institutional Members: receive all of the same benefits above; however, it includes unlimited individual memberships, and free access to the undergraduate student registry. Enhanced institutional members also receive extra discounts for registrations for CUR webinars.

CUR Publications- are meant to disseminate best practices in undergraduate research. Our offerings range from the handbooks of our "How-to" series to full-length publications, to collections of models and examples of best practices in undergraduate research. We also publish the *CUR Quarterly* and *CURQ on the Web* released seasonally. They serve as the official public "voice" of CUR to both its members and to a broader community. Their purpose is to provide useful and inspiring information about student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship from all types of institutions.

National Office, sometimes informally referred to as the N.O. - the physical headquarters of CUR in Washington, D.C. consisting of the following staff: the Executive Officer, the Sr. Director of Membership Services, Operations and Information Technology, the Director of Communications and Membership, the Director of Conference and Meeting Services, an Accounting Specialist, a Project Manager for Comprehensive Support for Faculty, Institutions, State Systems and Consortia, and an Administrative Assistant.

NCUR - the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research, an annual conference of undergraduate research presenters each spring (see http://www.cur.org/conferences_and_events/student_events/ncur/ for more information).

Posters on the Hill - an annual event in late March or April at which competitively selected student posters are displayed on the U.S. Capitol during a late afternoon reception. The poster session is preceded by an orientation session and visits by students and their faculty mentors to their Representatives and Senators' offices.