



Councilor's Handbook: A Guide to Leadership in CUR

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Welcome and Congratulations!

Congratulations on your successful election as a Division Councilor in the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR)! The mission of CUR - to support and promote 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, 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!

CUR's Mission, Strategic Pillars and Strategic Plan

The mission of the Council on Undergraduate Research is to support and promote high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship.

CUR has adopted five strategic pillars to aid the organization in planning and envisioning the future of undergraduate research. These pillars focus on areas that the General Council has deemed most important to the mission of the organization and are the following:

- **Integrating and Building Undergraduate Research into Curriculum and Coursework:** Focusing on building curriculum that is both research-based and supports undergraduate research as an outcome of curriculum.
- **Assessment of the Impact of Undergraduate Research:** Examines the outcomes of undergraduate research on students, faculty, curriculum, and institutions.
- **Diversity and Inclusion in Undergraduate Research:** Offers undergraduate research to a wider audience of undergraduates, faculty, and institutions to increase the diversity of participants, particularly from underrepresented groups and institutions.
- **Innovation and Collaboration in Undergraduate Research:** Expanding undergraduate research opportunities beyond academic institutions to research collaborations with business and nonprofit organizations as well as between higher education institutions.
- **Internationalization and Undergraduate Research:** Expanding the opportunities for research exchanges, research collaboration, and field research in international settings.

CUR is in the process of developing a vision statement and updating our strategic plan. However, our current strategic plan (2016-2019) focuses on three goals: Raising the profile of CUR, enhancing engagement of our members, and assessing undergraduate research.

Organization and Governance of CUR

The general membership of CUR is organized in a divisional structure that includes Arts and Humanities, Biology, Chemistry, Education, Engineering, Geosciences, Health Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Physics and Astronomy, Psychology, Social Sciences, an At-Large division that serves administrators and other disciplines, and a division for Undergraduate Research Programs.

Council on Undergraduate Research is governed by a General Council, which consists of Division Councilors, Executive Board members, and Emeritus Presidents. 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 3-year terms; others are involved for only one 3-year term. With both experienced and new councilors comprising each Division, the continuing evolution of the organization is ensured. CUR is supported by our National Office team, which is composed of talented professionals who are passionate about the work they do and who are committed to providing the highest standard of service for CUR's members and community.

Recently, CUR approved a change to our Constitution related to governance, which alters the composition of our Executive Board (E-Board). We will continue to have the following officer positions: President, who also serves as chair of the Executive Board, Immediate Past-President, President-Elect, and Treasurer. At the end of the current Secretary's term, this position will be dissolved, and the duties of the Secretary will be covered by a member of the National Office staff. The Executive Officer of CUR will continue to serve on the board, as an ex officio, non-voting member. The E-Board currently has both Divisional Representatives and General Representatives, elected by Divisions and General Council respectively. With the change in governance, there will be a shift to Council Representatives elected by General Council and representing the Council as a whole, and General Representatives selected by the E-Board. The changes were made to better reflect and address the role of the E-Board, which is to provide fiduciary oversight for the organization, provide oversight for the Executive Officer, monitor the progress of ongoing projects, discuss proposals and projects for further consideration by the General Council, and assist with CUR fundraising efforts. Treasurer, Council Representatives, and General Representatives serve for 3-year terms. The President also serves a 3-year term, in sequence as President-Elect, President, and Immediate Past-President. The Immediate Past-President serves as the primary contact for Divisions and Division chairs and the President-Elect as the primary contact for Committees and Committee chairs

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 (ABM) 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, taskforce, or Division chair.
3. The business of CUR is carried out through a variety of Division-specific and Council-wide Committees and task forces. Each Councilor participates in their Division's activities and may also actively serve on a Committee. Committee appointments are made by the CUR President-Elect and President with input from the Division Chair and require involvement throughout the year, although the amount of time varies 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 and are also by appointment by the CUR President-Elect and President.
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 biennial Conferences is essential
- Councilors provide service to their Division, to CUR-wide committees, and to focused task forces
- 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

Orientation Activities for New Councilors

The CUR President-Elect meets with new Councilors through a Webinar prior to the Annual Business Meeting. This is an opportunity to learn more about the structure of the business meeting and the plans for the organization.

Annual Business Meeting

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 is held in the same location and normally precedes the national conference. Generally, the business meeting is held the last 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 3-year terms. Vice-Chairs and Secretaries may also be elected to assist the chair and serve for a term of up to three years. 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. In addition to meetings, meals, breaks, and socials are scheduled so that you have an opportunity to relax and meet other councilors.

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.

Committees

Council on Undergraduate Research's committees come together to aid the work of the CUR General Council and support the overall mission of the organization by carrying out specific charges that are necessary to the operation of the organization. Committee membership is a great way for CUR members to share their passion and expertise, build professional networks, gain leadership experience, and help shape the organization. In many instances, new Councilors will not cycle onto a committee until after their first year, initially focusing on Division business. Committees are structured in several ways.

Standing Committees: Constitutionally mandated by the CUR Constitution and Bylaws. These committees cannot be modified or sunset without a vote of the General Council and include representation from all Divisions. These committees include the following: Finance, Nominations, and NCUR Oversight.

Continuing Committees: Standing committees established by the Executive Board and deemed necessary to the ongoing work of CUR. These committees include the following: Advocacy, Constitution and Bylaws, Investment, Diversity and Inclusion, Nominations Vetting, Program Review, and SPUR Editorial Board.

Award Review Committees: Committees established to solicit and review application for CUR awards. These committees include the following: CUR Campus-wide Award for UR Accomplishments (AURA), CUR Fellows Award, CUR Goldwater Mentor Award, CUR Arts and Humanities Mentor Award, Posters on the Hill Review.

Conference Committees: committees established to plan CUR conferences and major events. These committees include the following: CUR Biennial Conference Planning, and URP Conference Planning.

Ad Hoc Committees or Task Forces: Working groups appointed to engage in a specific task for a limited amount of time. They may be created or abolished as deemed necessary by the Executive Board. Current task forces include the following: Student Programs, CUR Liaisons, Faculty Workload-Evaluation-Promotion and Tenure, Innovation and Collaboration, Integrating Research into the Curriculum, Internationalization, and SPUR Access.

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. Additional Information on all committees can be found on the CUR Website: <https://www.cur.org/who/governance/committees/>

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 mid and 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 National 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.

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. Spread the word about CUR on your campus and at your professional meetings.
4. Nominate colleagues as CUR councilors - including divisions other than your own.
5. Share CUR news and your CUR involvement with your Chair, Dean, Provost, and President and with your colleagues across campus.
6. Be active on the CUR Community, to stay informed on member issues.

CUR has many ways for you to become involved in addition to service to your Division and service on Committees and task forces, these include facilitating institutes, presenting at conferences, posting on the CUR Community, and serving as a reviewer for our student conferences. You also play an important role as an advocate for undergraduate research on your campus and community. For additional information on all of these, please visit the CUR Website: <https://www.cur.org>.