Nominee: Dr. Sarah K. Fortner

Institution: Wittenberg University Geology & Environmental Science, Springfield, OH

Institutional affiliation: Wittenberg University

Current Position: Associate Professor of Geology & Environmental Science

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words):

I've served on the Innovation & Collaboration Task Force for multiple years & we've successfully migrated a platform for showcasing how faculty across disciplines are partnering in their communities & with industries to serve students. Now, I plan to focus on building collaborations between our geoscience organizations that give geology & related interdisciplinary fields a greater voice in decision making. Recently, I've helped convene a NAS Service Learning in Undergraduate Geosciences workshop and many faculty development webinars and workshops on partnering (including 3 at CUR meetings). Our program was just recognized by AAC&U for its civic engagement as a result of our participation in the NSF InTeGrate Project and intentional program design around partnering to address community issues. My students gain skills and habits and change agency. I'm currently serving as a AGI-GSA Scholar In Residence helping create a toolkit to expand entry points for geologists into local advocacy (esp. school boards, district offices, & cities). Important to this work is seeking to expand the voices involved in geoscience-tied decision making. I'm excited about synergies between the organizations I serve, & seek to support more opportunities for more students to address earth issues. I'm excited to represent CUR in this endeavor.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs): https://fortnerenvironmental.weebly.com/
Nominee: Dr. Elizabeth Heise

Institution: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Edinburg, TX

Institutional affiliation: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Current Position: Associate Professor of Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences
Vice Provost Fellow for Faculty Affairs and Diversity

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): I have been involved in projects increasing diversity in geosciences throughout my career. The majority of this work has centered around undergraduates engaging in authentic research during their degree. To date I have mentored 40 students in undergraduate research projects. Many of these projects have been presented at regional or national conferences. Some have been published in peer-reviewed journals. My efforts in this area have increased the numbers of Hispanic students seeking graduate degrees in geosciences. I currently work to increase diversity in the faculty throughout my university. These projects are very fundamental to how I view universities in the twenty-first century.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs):
https://webapps.utrgv.edu/aa/dm/index.cfm?action=profile&user=elizabeth.heise
Nominee: Dr. Uwe R Kackstaetter

Institution: Metropolitan State University of Denver, Denver, CO

Institutional affiliation: Faculty

Current Position: Associate Professor of Geology

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): From my qualifications and interests I can serve CUR as follows:

Integrating and Building Undergraduate Research into Curriculum and Coursework: I successfully implemented UR into our degree program and can serve the CUR community by lending a helping hand and advice in doing the same at their institution.

Assessment of the Impact of Undergraduate Research: Having experiences with our institution-wide, large, annual UR conference which doubles as an assessment base for UR, I feel qualified to help colleagues implementing assessment strategies into their specific UR needs.

Broadening Participation in Undergraduate Research: One of my key contributions at our institution was to implement mandatory UR for graduation within our program. Thus I am well versed in counseling fellow colleagues in how to engage students. In addition, we are an HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) and I am able to share many resources we have successfully implemented to increase student minorities in UR and beyond.

Innovation and Collaboration in Undergraduate Research: I have successfully partnered with outside sources for our UR needs (United States Geological Survey, Mine owners, Other research universities, etc.). I feel strongly that my experience in facilitating these connections would be of benefit to my colleagues at other institutions.

Internationalization and Undergraduate Research: I have successfully implemented UR projects in Ireland and Germany and would love to offer my background and expertise in this area to interested colleagues everywhere.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs): college.earthscienceeducation.net
Nominee: Dr. Mark L Lord

Institution: Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC

Institutional affiliation: Western Carolina University

Current Position: Professor of Geology

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): I wish to serve as a CUR Councilor because of my interest and experience related to undergraduate research. My membership in CUR and prior service as a Councilor has contributed significantly to my professional growth. Likewise, I think, I have been able to contribute effectively to CUR as a whole and to the Geosciences division. At my home institution and others, I’ve been an effective advocate of change in promoting increased opportunities for undergraduate research through teaching, administration, grants, and scholarship.

As an undergraduate student, I had a couple research experiences, which, like many, drove much of my initiative. I first mentored student research in graduate school and have continued since. Throughout my career, I’ve become increasingly effective as a mentor and in embedding authentic, significant undergraduate research experiences into traditional courses. Providing research experiences in tradition courses, at multiple levels of the curriculum, enable a greater number and diversity of students to benefit from this high-impact practice (Developing models for this is a focus of my current research). With my colleagues, state partners, and grants, we’ve been able to develop a functioning on-campus hydrologic research station that is now a nexus of faculty and student interdisciplinary research in and outside of courses.

As a councilor, I can also draw upon my past administrative experiences as a department head and as an associate provost. In these roles, I’ve was able to add research experiences to the curriculum, create a culture supportive of undergraduate research by emphasis during hiring new faculty, contribute to providing university wide support for faculty and students, and collaboration with different institutions and off-campus partners.

In sum, I am increasingly convinced through my own experiences, my own research, and the growing body of literature that undergraduate research should play an integral role in the undergraduate experience.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs): wchrs.wcu.edu
Nominee: Dr. Meagen Pollock

Institution: The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH

Institutional affiliation: The College of Wooster

Current Position: Associate Professor, Chair

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): My experience and interests in undergraduate research are an excellent fit for CUR’s mission and goals. Here are some ways that I contribute to most of CUR’s strategic pillars.

1. Integrating research into the curriculum – As a presenter in GeoCUR workshops, my role is to discuss this very topic. I describe my philosophy, which is more about integrating my courses into my research. My contributions to the SERC website also focus on engaging students in authentic research experiences, and I routinely teach research-based courses.

2. Assessment of undergraduate research – As a GeoCUR Councilor, I helped assemble a Zotero library of current references about undergraduate research assessment. I am currently working on the assessment of mentoring through a multi-institutional study through the Elon CEL Seminar and have two publications in press.

3. Diversity in undergraduate research – I directed the inaugural Keck Gateway program in 2017, which aimed to recruit and retain beginning students from underrepresented group. I am attending the GeoDES workshop on diversity and inclusivity in the geosciences next month. I bring these experiences to GeoCUR.

4. Internationalization in undergraduate research – My research involves international scientists who routinely interact with my students. My colleagues and I have shared our international experiences and best practices at professional meetings.

I realize that there is much more work to be done, and am committed to making progress on these pillars at every level. My goal is to serve my students, my college, and my discipline, all of which I can serve by serving CUR as a GeoCUR Councilor.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs): http://meagenpollock.voices-old.wooster.edu/
Nominee: Dr. Jeffrey G Ryan

Institution: University of South Florida, Tampa, FL

Title: Professor and Chair

Institutional affiliation: School of Geosciences, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620

Current Position: Professor of Geology

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): I am a research-active geoscientist, currently focused on issues related to island arcs and oceanic subduction zones, who has also been NSF-funded for over a decade to pilot and test strategies for integrating undergraduate research into courses and curricula. I served as a Program Officer in NSF-DUE from 2003-2005 and I have worked with many faculty to help them transform their course and curricular ambitions into fundable (and funded) NSF education projects. I've served as a Geoscience Councilor for a number of years, and I currently serve on the NCUR Oversight Committee, where I take advantage of my past experiences in meeting management (regional GSA meetings and like events) to try and help grow and improve the largest meeting (at 4000+ participants) that CUR oversees. I'm also a past facilitator in several different CUR Institutes (and I'm available to help out in these in the future!)

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs): https://sites.google.com/a/mail.usf.edu/jeffgryan/
Nominee: Dr. David Szymanski

Institution: Bentley University Natural and Applied Sciences, Waltham, MA

Institutional affiliation: Bentley University

Current Position: Associate Professor of Geology
Department of Natural & Applied Sciences
Director, Valente Center for Arts & Sciences

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): I am currently the director of an arts & sciences center at a business university. As the first scientist director of the center, I have collaborated with our Honors Program and have built undergraduate research programs focused on involving business students in arts & sciences–focused research (including traditional lab-based projects as well as other disciplinary and interdisciplinary projects). I have also integrated research-based service-learning projects in collaboration with non-profits into my courses; I have published on this work in several articles with Bentley colleagues in CUR Quarterly. My “home” department at Bentley in Natural and Applied Sciences also routinely offers international service-learning courses in which we eventually aim to incorporate research projects. I am involved in pedagogical research to assess transdisciplinary thinking among undergraduates and facilitate culture change in transdisciplinary approaches to curriculum development among all disciplines. Given our innovative efforts at Bentley in working with a unique population of business students – a group of students previously under-involved in undergraduate research – I believe our work scaffolds all of the CUR five strategic pillars.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs):
https://faculty.bentley.edu/details.asp?uname=dszymanski
Nominee: Dr. Kristina J Walowski

Institution: Middlebury College Geology, Middlebury, VT

Institutional affiliation: Middlebury College

Current Position: Assistant Professor of Geology

Keeping in mind CUR’s strategic pillars and strategic plan, please give us 300 words on how you are positioned to serve the Council? (limit 300 words): The reason that I am where I am today, is in large part due to my wonderful and formative experience in undergraduate research. This experience provided me with a unique form of mentorship, helped me gain confidence in my ability to be an independent scientist, and played a huge roll in my decision to go to graduate school. Now, as a new faculty member at an undergraduate-only institution, I feel very strongly about providing students with the same kinds of opportunities that I had. Along this vein, I strive to provide students with research-based projects in my curriculum and keep my doors open to any student interested in pursuing research projects in the geosciences. In addition, I appreciate that most undergraduates will not pursue academics. Thus, I am also in the process of building a research collaboration with a geothermal energy company. I also find great importance in international research opportunities as a result of my postdoctoral life and research abroad. At present, I am co-developing a field and research-based course in Costa Rica, which we hope will provide our students with a culturally and scientifically unique learning experience.

With my background and experience, I feel that the best way to move forward with my involvement in and promotion of undergraduate research is to become a CUR Councillor. I hope to bring a new perspective to the Geoscience Council, but also come with a willingness to learn and discuss new tools and strategies that I can bring back to my institution and share with colleagues at institutions across the US. Specifically, as my own institution grapples with how to effectively improve equity and diversity on campus, I find it extremely important to discuss and determine strategies for improving diversity amongst students and faculty in the geosciences.

Please provide a link to a website with any relevant supplemental information: (e.g. Two-page CV, LinkedIn page, Bio on Campus webpage, other websites or blogs): http://sites.middlebury.edu/walowski/