

## Melodie Eichbauer

### **What is your leadership experience in CUR and outside of CUR?**

I joined CURAH as a Councilor in 2020 and am excited for an opportunity to become more involved with the organization. At Florida Gulf Coast University, I currently serve in two leadership positions: in the Office of Undergraduate Scholarship Leadership since 2018, and as History B.A. Coordinator since 2017.

As a member of the Leadership Team in OUS, I have undertaken a number of initiatives. I worked to develop a Research & Scholarly Designated course attribute that will serve as a visible flag to employers and graduate schools that the student has engaged in research design, management, and execution. Such courses will provide students with a tangible deliverable that can be presented in oral and / or written form. I also served as the Conference Organizing Chair for the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference (FURC) held at FGCU on 21-22 February 2020. We accepted 468 abstracts and approximately 700 students in the fields of STEM, Arts and Humanities, Business, Medicine, and Legal Studies from Florida's public and private universities and colleges participated. I have spearheaded the development of an undergraduate research journal (Florida Undergraduate Research Journal) that will be under the umbrella of the Florida Undergraduate Research Association (FURA). Our goals are to provide aspirational students with enhanced opportunities for publication and professionalization, to engage students in a formal peer review process that promotes constructive feedback and professional development, and to highlight the centrality of FURA to student learning outcomes through the process of publishing pieces of original research. This journal also will provide professionalization opportunities to the advanced undergraduate students from across the state who serve as Student Editorial Managers.

As the Coordinator for the History B.A. I am responsible for the overall health of the program and introducing initiatives to move the degree program forward. I have spearheaded an overhaul of the degree program's curriculum. At the General Education level, we redistributed the writing intensive designations to divide GE requirements more evenly across our course offerings to serve students more efficiently. To stress the importance of global diversity and professionalization in upper-level courses, we changed the composition of our restrictive electives in the major to require students to take at least a certain number of credit hours in different global regions and now require students to take a Public History or Digital Humanities course to stress professionalization. Finally, we distinguished more clearly between our methodology course and our capstone course, which, in turn, necessitated a clearer distinction between our 3000-level courses and our 4000-level courses. I have worked with our subject librarian on this venture, particularly in rethinking the role a subject librarian can play in our upper-level curriculum. Together we developed strategies and exemplar syllabi that embed her into these courses. We presented our work at the 13th Annual Florida Statewide Symposium: Best Practices in Undergraduate Research on 23rd October 2020.

**Why are you interested in serving on the NVC and how does your past experience with CUR and or other organizations support your role on NVC?**

I am interested in serving on the NVC because engaged and excited faculty are essential for furthering undergraduate research and professionalization. While not with CUR, I have extensive experience serving on vetting committees. As a member of the Editorial Board for the Journal of Medieval History, I am frequently called upon to peer-review papers for publication and provide feedback for resubmission. As the Reviews Editor the Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law, I select the works to be reviewed for that volume and the reviewers to undertake those essays. The Bulletin's review essays have no maximum word limit and are intended to be a more in-depth analysis and critical assessment of the work than is usually allotted in a typical review. As a member of the Advisory Board for the International Society of Medieval Canon Law since 2016, I work with other members on the Board to support research, publications, and instruction in medieval canon law. One such task is the organization of the quadrennial International Congress of Medieval Canon Law which alternatively take place in North America and in Europe. Each Congress produces a lengthy volume of the Proceedings. I have vetted session and individual proposals for the 2020 Congress, which was rescheduled to 2021 on account of COVID. As a new Call for Papers was distributed for the rescheduled Congress, I again vetted proposals. I will repeat the process in the coming year as the 2021 Congress was postponed again on account of COVID until 2022 (the third time, I hope, is a charm). In addition, I have vetted proposals as a member of the Programming Board for the New College Conference on Medieval & Renaissance Studies since 2016.

**How will you represent and advance CUR-wide interests (please reference the CUR Mission and Strategic Plan)?**

I truly believe that supporting and promoting high-quality mentored undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry begins with CUR Councilors and CUR Members. They serve as points of contact between CUR and faculty across their respective campuses. Through discussions with faculty, CUR Councilors and Members open new doors of professional development to others on their campus by engaging them in the organization. The yearly CUR Conference and SPUR are invaluable resources for learning about what others across the country are doing to facilitate and support student scholarship. These ideas can then be adapted to one's own campus culture. CUR Councilors and Members promote NCUR as an important venue for the presentation of student scholarship and professionalization.

As a community, CUR Councilors and Members engage each other and their campuses in collaborative efforts to develop critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, and intellectual independence through an understanding of the research process. Such conversations are important to thinking about the existential question: 'what is research' and delving more deeply into the forms it takes and the professional opportunities that arise from it. The more engaged students are the more likely they are to complete a degree program and possess the skill set necessary for their chosen career or continuation to graduate study. As researchers we model for students the planning, execution, outcome, and dissemination of our work. Students see how to innovate when challenges arise, and how to overcome setbacks when they occur. Most importantly, research opportunities must be available to all who wish to partake, irrespective of background or circumstances. CUR Councilors and Members lead these conversations about how to provide such

opportunities. Yet, procuring the necessary funding is critical to expanding opportunities. Conversations across the CUR community faculty, staff, and administrators again lead the way for sharing best practices to ensure that Offices of Undergraduate Research are able to make their initiatives sustainable for the long-term. For me, serving on the NVC helps to foster these conversations and the community as a whole.