

Introduction

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Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of *Scholarship & Practice of Undergraduate Research (SPUR)*. In this issue, we consider the impressive reach of undergraduate research to varied student groups, different types of institutions, and across international and physical distances.

Over the past few years, the consideration of distant learning was a focus of attention as COVID-19 exacerbated its need, and we see ever-increasing student demand for its flexibility. With the subsequent growth of higher education in the distance arena, we wanted to see undergraduate research in the world around us, not just as a campus-based effort. Innovations in technology and collaboration have expanded learning through inquiry to all learners *everywhere and anywhere*. Undergraduate research can be boundless in its opportunities, as well as its location.

We hope that this issue inspires expansive and far-reaching efforts and serves as a call for continued innovation in undergraduate research. Let us challenge ourselves to see undergraduate research in communities, in classes, where people are together or when they are apart. The restrictions on how we come together to dialogue, ask questions, or explore solutions can be broken down and overcome. Our authors were very aware that they needed to explore and innovate to change the way we envision undergraduate research in a changing and boundless world. Leveraging their work to reenvision undergraduate research, the authors share ways that all students can benefit from the transformative power undergraduate research affords even in domains where undergraduate research has not historically been actualized. The authors argue that undergraduate research can be conducted in various locations and in many vehicles. We hope to emulate some of the innovation that our authors show as we practice undergraduate research; we hope these articles inspire you in the same way.

This collection starts off with Jaclyn Chastain, Santiago Luaces, Melodie Eichbauer, and Charles Gunnels (Florida Gulf Coast University) reminding us that undergraduate research has particularly powerful benefits for underserved and under-represented students. Further, we have existing systems intended to support underserved students that could be mobilized to engage students in such opportunities. They show us how a novel use of student aid to fund undergraduate research opportunities

can serve to engage students who otherwise might not be able to fit it into their busy schedules. Their model is one that we can all adopt to benefit students, faculty, and the reach of undergraduate research.

Likewise, Rebecca LeFebvre (Kennesaw State University) looks at political science research in introductory online courses. This pushes the envelope in terms of what levels and in what format Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (CUREs) take place. This quasiexperimental article illustrates that CUREs can look different and still have successful student learning outcomes.

As if inspired by Hensel's recent volume on undergraduate research at community colleges (see the book review), the Paula Croonquist (Anoka-Ramsey Community College) and coauthors (14 colleagues across 13 institutions) provide a vital contribution to the idea of undergraduate research *anywhere and everywhere*. They share their program engaging students in geonomics research at community colleges, which reminds us that highly technical research can be done with students in their early years of college. Looking to expand our viewpoint on where CUREs take place, this piece also demonstrates innovation and collaboration between various colleges.

In addition to collaborating between universities, we also have an example of collaboration between countries and cultures that serves to enrich student experiences. Jacques C. Richard (Texas A&M University) and So Yoon Yoon (University of Cincinnati) look at research experiences in engineering programs for both domestic and international students, illustrating that students studying abroad not only receive benefits but benefit their cohort as well. This shows that students gain from undergraduate research regardless of where it happens!

Included in this volume are two compelling pieces that will inspire you to read Harald A. Mieg (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Elizabeth Ambos (Council on Undergraduate Research, Retired), and Angela Brew's (Australasian Council for Undergraduate Research) *The Cambridge Handbook of Undergraduate Research: New Global Insights* and Hensel's *Undergraduate Research at Community Colleges: Equity, Discovery, and Innovation* (reviewed by Daniel Beugnet, Tallahassee Community College). Reflecting on their 3-year experience compiling the Handbook, Mieg et al. share what undergraduate research looks like across cultures, locations, and disciplines. By highlighting commonalities, while also offering insights into varied implementations, they help affirm and

expand the ways in which readers will consider their own work. True to the intentions of this volume, the Handbook reminds us that undergraduate research can and does - take place anywhere and everywhere.

Finally, it is valuable to consider the contrast between Beugnet's book review of Nancy Hensel's *Undergraduate Research at Community Colleges* and the commentary of Mieg et al. on the Handbook with its coverage of international efforts, including things such as student exchange programs. Through a classic (and perhaps outdated) lens, we might view these as opposite ends of the spectrum; community colleges strive to serve local communities and college-entry programs, while international exchanges tend to be associated with upper-division private school experiences. Fortunately, progress in many of our institutions has led us to weave the best strands of what we offer across these sectors. As Beugnet notes, the community

college environment is often overlooked in the conversation and underfunded when implementing a variety of high-impact practices. With the drive to introduce students to research earlier and more often, it is essential to bring community colleges into the conversation. Hensel's volume reminds us that community college faculty have been doing the work with impressive creativity, resourcefulness, and success.

In sum, these works remind us of the importance of undergraduate research and inspire us to find ways to expand its reach. At the end, we, along with the contributors herein, offer that there are no contexts in which undergraduate research is not possible and no group for whom it does not offer benefits. Perhaps the only thing limiting us in offering opportunities to students is our own imagination; we hope that the innovation of our contributors reminds us that is boundless as well.