



# WE ARE CUR

CONNECTING COMMUNITY  
THROUGH A TURBULENT YEAR

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



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There is much to be proud of, and it is the hard work of the CUR staff, volunteers, and community members that made it possible.

**Thank you.**



## From the desk of CUR's Executive Officer...

At the start of 2020, CUR launched the slogan “We are CUR.” I believe it succinctly expressed the CUR community spirit, as we are a welcoming community that comes together to solve problems while supporting, sharing, and learning with and from one another. As this year draws to a close, I recognize the wallop this year has packed; it certainly was a year of challenges. In light of all we have faced, we had the right mindset all along. Amid the substantial challenges of this year, this incredible community showed its resilience; commitment to each other and its extended constituencies; and strength in finding entirely new ways to support and promote high-quality mentored undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry together. This embodies the unique environment of CUR.

In February and March, as your personal and professional lives seemed to shift tectonically overnight, the CUR National Office quickly moved to find new ways to provide resources, learning opportunities, and connection among the community. You pivoted with us as we transitioned CUR's Posters on the Hill, Biennial Conference, and institutes to a virtual environment. In these transitions, there has been lots of learning:

- Zoom fatigue is real—a significant aspect of our newly virtual world.
- Twitter proved to be an amazing venue for sharing the impact of undergraduate research more broadly.
- Posters on the Hill reached thousands of new viewers beyond the typical several hundred individuals who attend in-person.
- Virtual events have engaged a broader swath of the undergraduate research community and partners due to their flexibility for participants and audiences.

Although many have missed connecting in person, I believe this year has unexpectedly brought our community closer. We have seen increased engagement in the CUR Community, generous support and sharing in our new CUR Conversations, and additional circulation of tips and tricks in the Five-in-Five video series. In the pages that follow, you will find the people, programs, and accomplishments of this year. There is much to be proud of, and it is the hard work of the CUR staff, volunteers, and community members that made it possible. Thank you.

In 2021, may we build on the resilience displayed this year and provide resources, services, and support that embodies our vision, enriching and advancing society through undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry. As we continue to grapple with the challenges of overlapping personal and professional spaces, and I may be home in my slippers, I think CUR continues to become more nimble and robust. Take a few minutes to celebrate all we accomplished together in 2020, setting the stage for further collaboration, connection, and growth in 2021.

**We are CUR.**

Yours in service,

*Lindsay Currie*  
Executive Officer, CUR

## From the desk of CUR's Board President...

As I prepared to take office in summer 2020, there were considerable challenges to face. The COVID-19 pandemic sent many CUR members into virtual class spaces, some for the first time, and presented new situations such as implementing remote mentoring, conducting high-quality undergraduate research projects at a distance, and providing support to students and mentors facing uncertain academic and career environments. The heartbreaking but necessary decision to cancel the March 2020 National Conference on Undergraduate Research that provides invaluable presentation and networking opportunities for more than 4,000 students each year posed larger questions such as the need to provide professional development opportunities to undergraduate researchers amid the restrictions of the pandemic. CUR responded by holding the popular Posters on the Hill on Twitter on April 21, 2020. This new venue opened the event to a larger interactive audience, setting the stage for many successful virtual events hosted by the CUR National Office. These initiatives highlighted the staff's dedication to assisting the undergraduate research community as it grappled with new demands on the local, regional, and national levels.

The release of CUR's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan in June 2020 featured five goal areas that became the organization's main driving forces during the pandemic. These areas serve the undergraduate research community in the best possible ways, knowing that CUR membership keeps us together. CUR needed to adapt quickly to the "new normal" by continuing, and even increasing, efforts to provide leadership in undergraduate research content through multiple methods: conferences, CUR Conversations, webinars, interactions through the online CUR Community, and more. But this also meant we needed to reach out to diverse communities. The pandemic underscored the inequities faced by students and mentors from different cultural, socioeconomic, geographic, and institutional backgrounds who felt isolated from their peers and others because of technology issues or other circumstances in their home and/or work environments. To respond to this challenge, the dedicated CUR Diversity and Inclusion Committee hosted a Town Hall in June 2020 followed by multiple CUR Conversations during fall 2020. Implicit-bias training programs, culturally sensitive mentoring initiatives, and new ways to promote broader participation and impact in undergraduate research and CUR itself are examples of top priorities in the year ahead. Because of CUR's firm commitment to inclusive practices, the CUR Executive Board is currently revising the CUR-endorsed definition of undergraduate research to better align with the Strategic Plan's diversity, equity, and inclusion values.

As the future unfolds, there will be cause for rejoicing when we can reunite in person with our CUR colleagues, but there are some practices implemented during COVID-19 that look promising in a post-pandemic world. Some of the virtual meetings and gatherings are likely to stay, especially those delivered in more streamlined formats that can be easily attended from home. Strategic in-person meetings to advance CUR's main goals such as communications, collaborations, and partnerships as well as gatherings of more established groups in a virtual environment also may be a part of our bright future. What the COVID-19 pandemic taught us in 2020 is that the heart and soul of CUR resides in its large community and that an agile, nimble, and adaptive National Office helped to keep the family together.



*Silvia Ronco*

Research Corporation for Science Advancement  
CUR President, 2020-21

Implicit-bias training programs, culturally sensitive mentoring initiatives, and new ways to promote broader participation and impact in undergraduate research and CUR itself are examples of top priorities in the year ahead.

# LEADERSHIP

CUR strives to provide intellectual leadership for the field of undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry. As a community-focused organization, CUR's continued leadership through its volunteers, whether as a board member, councilor, reviewer, etc, allows for the ongoing success of the community. Our volunteers strive to empower and support the leading voice of undergraduate research and make CUR an inclusive home for all types of undergraduate research and their stakeholders.



**SILVIA RONCO**  
PRESIDENT, CHEMISTRY



**JANICE DeCOSMO**  
IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT, UR PROGRAMS



**JEANNE MEKOLICHICK**  
PRESIDENT-ELECT, SOCIAL SCIENCES



**KAREN HAVHOLM**  
TREASURER, UR PROGRAMS



**LINDSAY CURRIE**  
EX OFFICIO, CUR NATIONAL OFFICE

## Executive Board Members



**Joanne Altman**, Division Representative  
*Psychology*



**John Barthell**, General Representative  
*At-Large*



**Donna Charlevoix**, General Representative  
*Geosciences*



**Beth Cunningham**, General Representative  
*Physics and Astronomy*



**Carlos Escoto**, General Representative  
*Psychology*



**Bridget Gourley**, Division Representative  
*Chemistry*



**Marilyn Hart**, Division Representative  
*At-Large*



**Kimberly Harris**, Council Representative  
*Education*



**Maria Iacullo-Bird**, Council Representative  
*Arts and Humanities*



**Niharika Nath**, Council Representative  
*Health Sciences*



**Karen Resendes**, Council Representative  
*Biology*



**Charlotte Simmons**, Council Representative  
*Math & Computer Sciences*



**Binod Tiwari**, Council Representative  
*Engineering*



COUNCILORS

271

- 23 ARTS & HUMANITIES
- 20 AT-LARGE
- 24 BIOLOGY
- 24 CHEMISTRY
- 15 EDUCATION
- 23 ENGINEERING
- 18 GEOSCIENCES
- 14 HEALTH SCIENCES
- 22 MATH & COMPUTER SCIENCES
- 24 PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY
- 19 PSYCHOLOGY
- 21 SOCIAL SCIENCES
- 24 UR PROGRAMS

\*CUR Constitution allows a maximum of 24 councilors per division.

OVERALL REVIEWERS

1200+

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

176

COMMITTEES

19

- FINANCE
- NCUR OVERSIGHT
- NOMINATIONS
- ADVOCACY + STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
- CONSTITUTION + BYLAWS
- DIVERSITY, EQUITY + INCLUSION
- INVESTMENTS
- NOMINATIONS VETTING
- PROGRAM REVIEW
- SPUR EDITORIAL BOARD
- ARTS + HUMANITIES MENTOR AWARD
- AURA AWARD
- CUR FELLOWS
- CUR-GOLDWATER SCHOLARS FACULTY MENTOR
- POSTERS ON THE HILL
- CUR BIENNIAL CONFERENCE PLANNING
- REU SYMPOSIUM
- URPD CONFERENCE PLANNING
- FACULTY WORKLOAD, EVALUATION, PROMOTION + TENURE TASK FORCE

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

1600+

# WHO GOT INVOLVED

The work displayed throughout this YIR shows the dedication of the community.

LEADER SHIP



# 2020 AWARDS

## Arts + Humanities Faculty Mentor Award

**Charles Parrott**, *Kennesaw State University*  
**Ruben Dupertuis**, *Trinity University*

## ChemCUR Outstanding Mentorship Award

Chemistry Division

**Genvieve Henry**, *Susquehanna University*  
**James Phillips**, *University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire*  
**Aimée Tomlinson**, *University of North Georgia*

## Course ReDesign Award

Education Division

**H. James McLaughlin**, *Rollins College*

## CUR Geosciences UR Mentor Award

Geosciences Division

**Jennifer Collins**, *University of South Florida*

## CUR-Goldwater Scholars Faculty Mentor Award

Andreen Endowment

**Steven J. Miller**, *Williams College*  
*Math + Computer Sciences Division*

## Excellence in Mentoring UR Award

Social Sciences Division

**Marsha Walton**, *Rhodes College*

## CUR Fellows Award

**Michael Dorff**, *Brigham Young University*  
*Mathematics + Computer Sciences*  
**George C. Shields**, *Furman University*  
*Chemistry*

## Faculty Mentor Award

Math + Computer Sciences Division

**Carolyn Otto**, *University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire*  
**Rachael Neilan**, *Duquesne University*  
**Vinodh Kumar Chellamuthu**, *Dixie State University*

## Faculty Career Award

Biology Division

**Anne Brown**, *Virginia Tech*  
**Christopher Lassiter**, *Roanoke College*  
**Terry Hill**, *Rhodes College*

## NCUR Presentation Award

At-Large Division: 13 recipients

## Posters on the Hill Presentation Award

Engineering Division: 6 recipients

## Research Small Grant

Biology Division: 10 recipients  
 Health Sciences Division: 4 recipients

## Student Travel Award

Biology Division: 3 recipients  
 Physics + Astronomy Division: 6 recipients  
 Psychology Division: 12 recipients  
 Social Sciences Division: 9 recipients

## Student Award

Health Sciences Division

**Sheridan Sargent** (Mentor, Jessica Clark), *Salisbury University*  
**Kyoko Hamagata** (Mentor, Esther Dupont-Versteegden), *University of Kentucky*  
**Jennie Nelson** (Mentor, Jason Pilarski), *Idaho State University*  
**Ashlee Mitchison** (Mentor, Kristen Konkel), *Northern Arizona University*

## Student-Faculty Collaborative Research Award

Education Division

**Morgan Daubert** (Mentor, Megan Adkins), *University of Nebraska - Kearney*  
**Kobi Alcocer** (Mentor, JongHun Sung), *Idaho State University*

## Video Scholarship Award

Engineering Division: 12 recipients



# SPUR

Scholarship +  
Practice of  
Undergraduate  
Research

## Winter 2019

Theme: *A Retrospective on Undergraduate Research*

## Spring 2020

Theme: *Undergraduate Research in the Twenty-First Century*

## Summer 2020

Theme: General

## Fall 2020

Theme: General  
Vignette Edition: *Undergraduate Research during Times of Disruption*

2020 ISSUES

4

TOTAL READERS

13,000+

TOTAL AUTHORS

127

REVIEWERS

67

TOTAL SPUR SUBMISSIONS

191

## TOP FIVE SPUR ARTICLES READ

January - November 2020

Jones, winter 2019 SPUR

*Introduction, "A Retrospective on Undergraduate Research"*

Beer et al., spring 2019 SPUR

*A Peer Research Consultant Program: Feasibility and Outcomes*

Puniwai-Ganoot et al.,  
summer 2018 SPUR

*Mentoring Pacific Islanders for Conservation Careers*

Sell et al., spring 2019 SPUR

*The Impact of Undergraduate Research on Academic Success*

Bhattacharyya et al.,  
spring 2020 SPUR

*Course-Based Research: A Vehicle for Broadening Access to Undergraduate Research in the Twenty-First Century*

New Additions

### Webinar

So You Are Thinking about Publishing in SPUR

### SPUR Cumulative Index

A compiled index of SPUR volumes 1-3, 2017-2020

LEADER  
SHIP



# SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP

## CUR NATIONAL OFFICE



HEATHER WAKEFIELD

Sr. Director | Program Strategy, Development + Design

hwakefield@cur.org



ELIZABETH MORIS

Director | Brand Engagement

emoris@cur.org



ROBIN HOWARD

Director | Membership + Volunteer Strategy + Experience

robin@cur.org



PAMELA DODGE

Sr. Manager | Finance + Operations

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BETH FOXWELL

Manager | Editorial Projects + Communications

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LIZ HAINS

Manager | Events + Programs

liz@cur.org

## Diversity, Equity + Inclusion

In the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, CUR set a goal to develop a culture and community that actively prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2020, the strength, sustainability, and true excellence of undergraduate research was tested by external limitations and brought to the forefront of our community as well as the world. CUR continued to welcome all academic disciplines and institutional types across the US and world as well as ensure that equitable access to programs and resources were addressed effectively for the entire community.



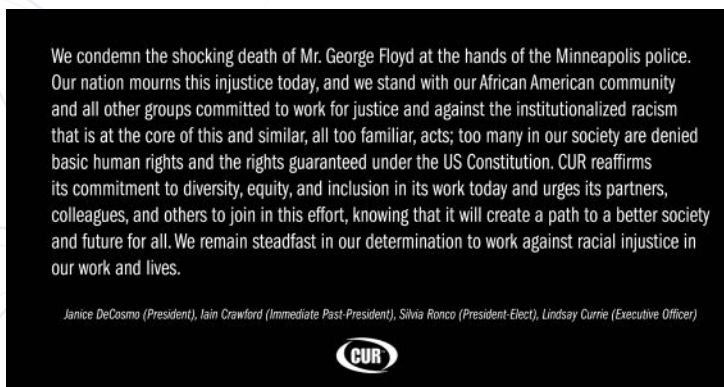
## Connecting the Community

June 2020  
Leadership Town-Hall Discussion

Early October 2020  
Critical Conversations  
Two Councilor Trainings

Late October 2020  
CUR Conversation  
Member-only informal discussion facilitated by DEI committee co-chair

December 2020  
Released dates and opened abstracts for 2021 Centering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in UR + Creative Activity Conference





University of Missouri  
CUR Institutional Member

**A+P**  
ADVOCACY + PARTNERSHIPS

**Posters on the Hill (POH)**

COVID-19 may have caused the cancellation of in-person activities for POH 2020, but a very exciting Twitter takeover day honoring participants and their research took place on April 21, 2020. The talented undergraduates displayed digital versions of their posters and shared their research and experiences with other students, congressional representatives and staffers, faculty mentors and administrators, disciplinary societies, and the general public. This critical piece of CUR's advocacy efforts did not go unnoticed.

**#URExchange**  
As an opportunity for the community to continue to network, develop, and share research and experiences, CUR developed UR Exchange Twitter takeover on November 12, 2020. A Twitter takeover is when a number of individuals or Twitter handles use a specified hashtag at a specific time and day, allowing that hashtag to be more recognized by others on the platform. During this event, CUR supported students, followers, volunteers, partners, and others to ensure that the power of UR was widely spread and recognized.



Including many congressional appointees:  
**Senator Jon Tester**, Montana  
**Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman**, New Jersey  
**Senator Chris Coons**, Delaware

**OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS**

- Opposed the Executive Order regulating diversity trainings while also supporting anti-racist education, a call for a National Academies study on the influence of systemic racism in academic, and COVID relief dollars to support higher education research programs.
- Participated in Society for Science and the Public's Twitter chat, "Research at Home," on September 23, 2020 via invitation.
- Hosted UR Exchange Twitter takeover on November 12, 2020.
- CUR EO joined a working group, led by Kavli Civic Science, American Geophysical Union, and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, which began work to catalyze institutional changes toward greater support of research and engagement that make a societal impact.
- CUR EO wrote the introduction to the Advancing Research Impact in Society (ARIS) December 2020 newsletter, which focused on UR.
- House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Chair Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and Ranking Member Frank Lucas (R-OK) introduced H.R. 144, the Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act. In 2021, EBJ reintroduced the bill that CUR supported last year.



**FEB**

**CUR DIALOGUES**

We brought faculty and administrators to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to interact with federal agency program officers and other grant funders.

**SPEAKERS**  
**46**

**ATTENDEES**  
**163**

**MAR**

**NCUR 2020**

COVID-19 was confirmed as a pandemic. CUR and Montana State University (MSU) made the difficult decision to cancel NCUR 2020, originally scheduled to take place on MSU's campus in Bozeman, MT on March 26-28, 2020.

**TURNING POINT TO VIRTUAL**

**JUNE**

**Virtual ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

Cognizant of the environment, CUR utilized the CUR Community along with shortening the pre-existing ABM style, allowing for more targeted conversations amongst the current Executive Board and General Council.

**ATTENDEES**  
**250**

**Virtual BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**

The largest virtual event held in 2020, VBC offered a mix of synchronous and asynchronous content during and for 11 months after the event.

**WORKSHOPS**  
**6**  
**HOURS OF CONTENT**  
**80+**

**ATTENDEES**  
**450**

**ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

**Five-in-Five Videos**

A video series where community members address five questions, tips, or tricks in five minutes.

**VIDEOS**  
**12**

**TOTAL VIEWS**  
**832**

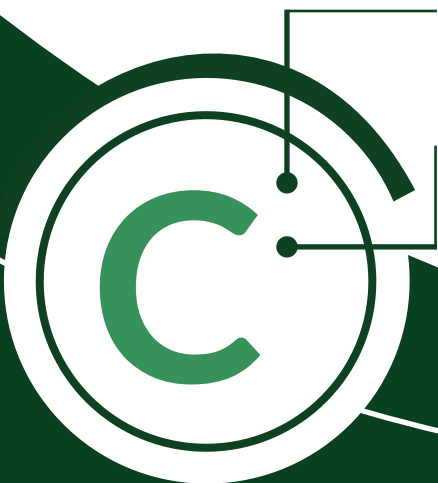
**CUR Conversations**

Informal, intimate discussions on hot topics, hosted by CUR and facilitated by a member of the community.

**TOPICS**  
**7**

- Virtual Research Skill-building
- Ethics in Virtual Research
- Councilor Nominations Interest Chat
- Offering UR to Diverse Groups Virtually
- Addressing Mental Health in a Virtual World
- CUR Fellows on Collaboration
- Mentoring Virtual UR

**COMMUNITY+COLLABORATION**



Amid the substantial challenges of this year, this incredible community showed its resilience; commitment to each other and its extended constituencies; and strength in finding entirely new ways to support and promote high-quality mentored undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative inquiry together.

Lindsay Currie | CUR EO



# MEMBERSHIP

## New Additions

### Website Pages

Subscribe, check out new logos, and see what's happening within divisions.

### Announcements

Check out Chemistry's podcast within your Member Resource Library + thank you to Health Sciences for the CUR Conversation on mental health.

## DIVISIONS

TOTAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS  
**12,395**

TOTAL INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED  
**901**

TOTAL MEMBER INSTITUTIONS  
**587**

TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS  
**11,402**














FACULTY MEMBERS  
**3,611**

STUDENT MEMBERS  
**2,167**

STAFF MEMBERS  
**870**

AFFILIATE MEMBERS  
**17**

## BREAKDOWN

-  **1,152** **ARTS & HUMANITIES**  
*Chair: Alexa Sand, Utah State University*
-  **1,124** **AT-LARGE**  
*Chair: Marilyn Hart, Minnesota State University - Mankato*
-  **1,278** **BIOLOGY**  
*Chair: Lance Barton, Austin College*
-  **957** **CHEMISTRY**  
*Chair: Amy Deveau, University of New England*
-  **437** **EDUCATION**  
*Chair: Kymberly Harris, Georgia Southern University*
-  **419** **ENGINEERING**  
*Chair: Heather Dillon, University of Washington*
-  **225** **GEOSCIENCES**  
*Chair: Mark Lord, Western Carolina University*
-  **696** **HEALTH SCIENCES**  
*Chair: Leann Laubach, University of Central Oklahoma*
-  **642** **MATH & COMPUTER SCIENCES**  
*Chair: Andrea Tartaro, Furman University*
-  **341** **PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY**  
*Chair: Toni Sauncy, Texas Lutheran University*
-  **984** **PSYCHOLOGY**  
*Chair: Karen Gunther, Wabash College*
-  **1,185** **SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
*Chair: Leslie Cecil, Stephen F. Austin State University*
-  **988** **UR PROGRAMS**  
*Chair: Charles (Billy) Gunnels, Florida Gulf Coast University*



NEW USERS

1,541

FIRST-TIME POSTERS

169

DISCUSSION REPLIES

8,755

TOP THREE

#### Discussions

- Free Platform for Virtualizing UR Poster Sessions
- Undergraduate Research Certificate
- Alternative Student Research Ideas

#### Most Liked Content

- Undergraduate Research Stipends and Financial Aid
- Five-in-Five: 5 Tips to Boost Your Virtual Conference Experience at #VBC2020
- Three-Minute Thesis

#### Engaged Members

- Janice DeCosmo
- Silvia Ronco
- Charles (Billy) Gunnels

MEMBER RESOURCE LIBRARY

#### MRL

The Member Resource Library (MRL) was built in 2020 to share internal and external resources that help navigate undergraduate research best practices, educational tips and tricks, and much more.

13,321

Library Entry Views

TOTAL COMMUNITIES  
24

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

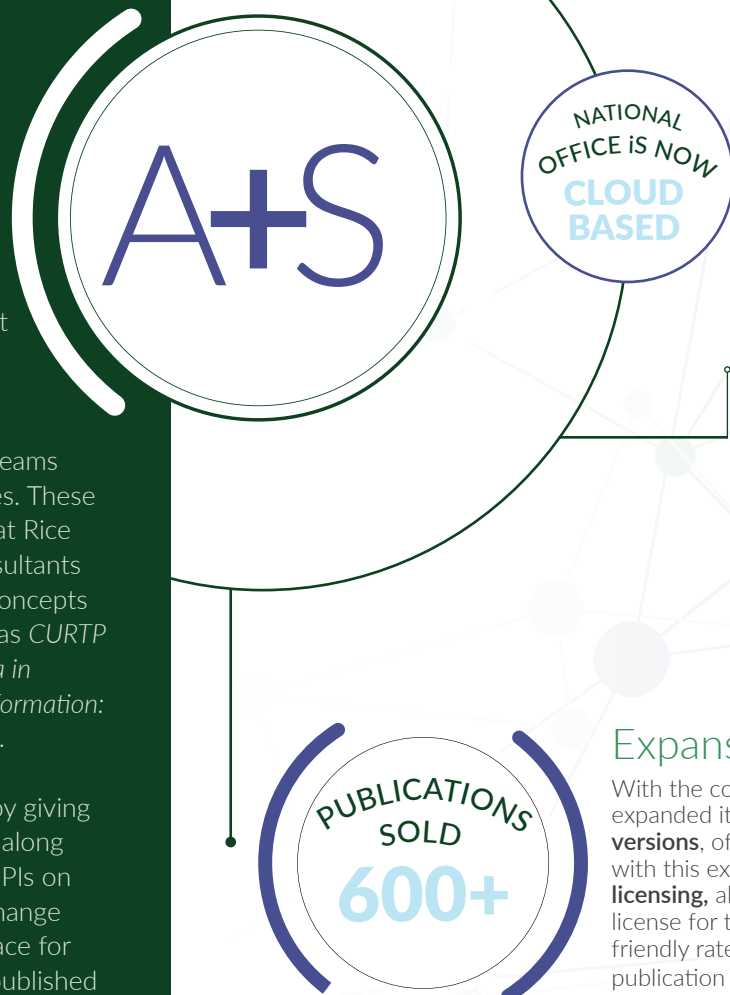
# UPDATE ON GRANT NSF-DUE IUSE 16-25354

*Integrating and Scaffolding Research into Undergraduate STEM Curricula: Probing Faculty, Student, Disciplinary, and Institutional Pathways to Transformational Change*

The CUR Transformations (CURTP) project continued to impact student learning and outcomes at the 24 departments that are involved in the project. Despite the challenges of COVID that moved much of the work online, enormous impacts on curriculum, departmental culture, and the research questions that drive the project occurred in the biology, chemistry, physics, and psychology departments represented.

The project involved a number of activities to assist teams from campuses in advancing transformational changes. These included attendance at the annual fall meeting (held at Rice University in October, 2019), site visits from the consultants who assist the campus teams, newsletters detailing concepts that drive the project goals, webinars on topics such as *CURTP Student Survey: A Discussion of Findings and Using Data in Departments* and *Involving Students in Curricular Transformation: Communicating Change, Inviting Input, and Giving Voice*.

Departments are now beginning to share outcomes by giving presentations on campuses and at national meetings along with producing publications detailing their work. The PIs on the project are working on developing a Theory of Change Model that outlines the factors that seem to be in place for real change to take hold. Their initial thoughts were published in a monograph on systemic change. Despite challenges, the participants have sustained their energy and commitment to this work and are forging ahead in year five of the project.



# ACCOUNTABILITY + SUSTAINABILITY

## COMMUNITY GOALS

In July 2020, the CUR Executive Board, along with CUR's National Office, rolled out the 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan representing five main goals to achieve over the next five years.

### Upgraded Work System

The CUR National Office moved to a cloud-based work system, allowing staff to maintain services virtually. Now, the team is able to communicate efficiently both externally and internally to improve customer service and implementation of new programs for members.

### A Different Way to Learn

CUR introduced three **virtual institutes** in 2020. CUR Framework was an expansion on a successful Virtual Biennial pre-conference workshop, and due to the demand for personalized learning, CUR created two customized virtual institutes.

CUR began offering **consulting services** to individuals preparing proposals for submission to external funding agencies.

### Expansion in Offerings

With the continued need for easy accessibility, CUR expanded its print publications to include **electronic versions**, offering convenience for the community. Along with this expansion, CUR deployed the option for **library licensing**, allowing an institution to purchase a publication license for the campus to use as a whole at a budget-friendly rate. These two expansions led to over 600 publication purchases for the year.

