



Social Science Division Newsletter Fall 2013

Greetings from the Division Chair!

This is our fourth year of distributing an electronic newsletter to our divisional members. I would like to extend my appreciation to Jeanne Mekolichick for her great work in organizing the newsletter. I'm pleased to report that we now have more than 650 members in the Social Science Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research. This is also our fourth year of offering student travel awards through the division. Your students can receive a travel grant of up to \$200 for presenting at a regional, national or even international disciplinary association meeting. As noted in this newsletter, student requests for funding can now be submitted electronically. Our newsletter provides additional information on how your students can present their research in the spring of 2014 at Posters on the Hill or the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.



I encourage you to consider serving as a councilor in the Social Science Division. Divisional councilors serve as the governing body of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR). This newsletter describes the call for

nominations to serve as a councilor with a deadline of November 8th. Our fall 2013 newsletter includes profiles of several of our new divisional councilors. I also encourage you to consider presenting at the National Conference of CUR which will be held June 28-July 1, 2014 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. Our division can contribute valuable presentations pertaining to the assessment of undergraduate research, community-based undergraduate research, undergraduate research in the context of study abroad programs, interdisciplinary undergraduate research, and a myriad of other topics. Our division has much to offer at the 2014 CUR National Conference given the wealth of expertise and breadth of disciplines represented in our division. A proposal for a panel or workshop can be submitted at http://www.cur.org/conferences_and_events/cur_conference_2014/. The deadline for submissions is November 15, 2013.

The Executive Board of CUR has organized various task forces on the assessment of undergraduate research, broadening participation, innovation and commercialization, integration of teaching and research, and the internationalization of undergraduate research. My hope is that we can share with you best practices, models, and funding opportunities in each of these areas. We will keep you posted through our newsletters and the divisional website at www.cur.org/

Please know that CUR continues to advocate on behalf of funding for the social, behavioral and economic sciences. CUR works with Washington Partners to keep you apprised of

the latest developments in Congress in relation to funding undergraduate research. The very regrettable decision by Congress to eliminate NSF funding for political science research unless it is “vital to national security or the economic interests of the country” serves as a reminder of the importance of our continued advocacy efforts.

We hope this fall 2013 electronic newsletter provides you with helpful information about the exciting projects and initiatives in the Social Science Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research. We very much appreciate your membership in our division and CUR. If I can be of any assistance or answer any questions that you might have about the division, please do not hesitate to contact me (229-333-5694 or jlaplant@valdosta.edu). I look forward to hearing from you.

James T. LaPlant, Division Chair

CUR Posters on the Hill

It's time to encourage your students and past students to submit their applications for CUR's **Posters on the Hill**, our flagship venue for the demonstration of excellent undergraduate scholarly activity. Applications are due now through **November 4, 2013**, with the selected participants notified in February 2014 for the late spring event. The call for abstracts can be found on the CUR website under the tab for Conferences and Events: choose Student Events, then Posters on the Hill.

Posters is a highly competitive venue, with fewer than 10% of all entrants selected to participate: last year, there were nearly 900 abstracts submitted, and 72 students ultimately presenting. Because of this, it's crucial to work with your students to help bring their abstracts to a competitive level. The statement of the problem and its social implications must be compelling; the methods must be clear; and the findings should suggest real possibilities for social or policy action. The programs from prior

years' Posters are online, and students can study those abstracts for strong examples.

In addition to the abstract, students submit a biography, and reviewers consider carefully whether a student will be a good representative of CUR through her or his presentation. Encourage your students to write about their leadership work, public speaking experience, and other activities that suggest their capability to represent their work in person.

Because CUR uses this event as a means of persuading legislators and their staff about the importance of undergraduate research, even a highly-regarded abstract may not be selected. Once the pool of applicants has been winnowed down to only the highest rated, geographical distribution becomes an important major factor: last year's posters represented 42 states plus Puerto Rico. In addition, CUR attempts to represent work from all of its academic divisions, so in 2012 (the most current year available on the website), Social Science



students presented nine posters of the 72 total. As a faculty mentor, you can help your students achieve consideration through an excellent application package; as with any other academic application process, the rest will be out of your (and your students') hands. For additional information please visit: http://www.cur.org/conferences_and_events/student_events/posters_on_the_hill_call_for_abstracts/

Attention Social Science Researchers!
28th National Conference on
Undergraduate Research (NCUR)
April 3-5, 2014
University of Kentucky

Public presentation of one's work is a vital element of undergraduate research, and NCUR provides this opportunity to more than 3,000 student scholars from more than 300 colleges and universities across the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Student researchers present their works in continuous poster exhibitions, oral presentations, and artistic performances with additional opportunities to join discussion groups and meet with representatives from graduate programs.

The abstract submission process opened September 30 and ends December 6.

Information regarding the submission process and conference details can be found at: http://www.cur.org/ncur_2014/

2012-2013 Report on Social Science
Division Travel Funds

Last year we fully committed our student travel budget. We were able to fund 9 projects fully at the \$200 level, and one at \$100. We funded travel to five Psychology, two Anthropology, and two Political Science conferences. The participants were from Luther College, Bradley University, Pacific Lutheran, Rhodes College, University of Arkansas at Monticello, University of California- San Diego, University of Illinois-Springfield, College At Brockport (SUNY system), and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. Reports from the students indicate that they gained much from their experiences. We will once again be supporting student travel for the 2013-2014 academic year. Please contact Dr. Amy Wolaver, awolaver@bucknell.edu to apply for one of these awards. Application guidelines can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Deadline for CUR Social Science
Councilor Applications Approaching!

The nominations for Councilors in the Social Science Division **will close on November 8!** If you are interested in becoming more involved in CUR, please consider nominating yourself for one of the eight open positions for a three year term.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about undergraduate research as a process as well as help shape the future of undergraduate research. Being a councilor allows individuals a position of leadership as they engage in meetings and assignments throughout the year. Councilors meet yearly for a face-to-face business meeting and have interim phone calls to manage business items. Becoming a nominee is easy and requires two easy steps. First, make sure you are a paid CUR member or you work at a school with an institutional membership. Second, nominees, or current members whose term is up, log on to the CUR website and fill out the councilor nomination form. The nomination form as well as additional information about the councilor position can be found at:

http://www.cur.org/membership/cur_councilor/

If you have any questions about being a Councilor, please contact James LaPlant, Social Science Division Chair (229-333-5694 or jlaplant@valdosta.edu). We look forward to hearing from you.

New Councilor Profiles

Ande Nesmith is an assistant professor at the University of St. Thomas in the School of Social Work. Prior to St. Thomas, Ande was a Senior Researcher at Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of



Chicago. Her research focuses on outcomes for youth transitioning out of foster care and into independent living. In her three years on the St. Thomas faculty, she was able to engage undergraduates in research for the first time, and discovered it as a passion. She has mentored undergraduates in their own funded and non-funded projects, as assistants in her research, and in collaborative scholarly writing.

Christopher Lee is a Professor of Geography at California State University, Long Beach. He has thirty years of university level teaching and research experience and has served as a Visiting Senior Scientist in the Applications, Commercialization and Education Division at NASA Headquarters and



a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at Alexandria University Egypt. His research interests broadly apply to remote sensing, physical geography, and applications of geospatial techniques to core problems, such as emergency management, land cover mapping, landscape and terrain analysis, and national intelligence. Chris is also focused on geospatial workforce development and undergraduate research. He has been the Principal Investigator on NSF and NASA grants totaling \$3.2 million. He is currently the Principal Investigator of an NSF Research Opportunities for Undergraduates (REU) grant “Geospatial Research and Mapping” (GRAM) and has recently been involved in research on Easter Island and the Hawaiian Islands of Kauai and Oahu.



**Council on Undergraduate Research
Social Science Division
Student Travel Awards Announcement
2013 - 2014**

The Social Science Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) is offering a limited number of travel grants, up to \$200 each, for undergraduate students presenting the results of research that they have conducted at a regional or national, discipline-specific meeting during the academic year 2013 - 2014. Award recipients are required to acknowledge CUR for support of their travel in their talk or poster. After the meeting, a brief report about the experience is expected. Minority students are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Undergraduate students at any level can apply but preference will be given to juniors and seniors or students attending 2 year community colleges.
- Student's mentor must be a CUR member or the student's home institution must be a CUR institutional member.
- Student's home institution must match the \$200 CUR travel grant.

Application materials:

- An electronic copy of the meeting abstract, including the title of the abstract, student author, faculty mentor, and institution. If the abstract is written in highly technical terms, the applicant may also submit a brief (maximum 500 words) summary of the work written for an audience consisting of social scientists from a wide range of disciplines. The abstract should note the study's objective, methods, results and importance.
- Proof of acceptance to the regional or national meeting.
- A list of itemized meeting expenses (travel, housing, and registration).
- An email from sponsoring faculty acknowledging (1) student's enrollment as an undergraduate, (2) confirmation of student's planned attendance at the meeting, (3) confirmation of institution's monetary match of \$200, and (4) confirmation of individual or institutional CUR membership.
- Reimbursement of travel expenses (up to \$200) will require copies of receipts and confirmation of student's attendance/presentation at the meeting.

Selection Criteria: Travel Award recipients will be selected on a first come, first serve basis provided that the above criteria are met. Only one travel award will be granted per institution.

Deadline: Applications for a travel grant to a fall 2013 or spring 2014 meeting are now being accepted. Award decisions will be made on a first come, first serve basis.

Submission of Application Materials: <http://tinyurl.com/l4zuc2y>