Connect with CUR!

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Message from the Chair, January 2020

Charles (billY) Gunnels, Florida Gulf Coast University

Creating a partnership with highly ambitious students has the potential to increase the success of any program or office that supports undergraduate research. Fortunately for us, this tends to be the same students that participate in undergraduate research. These research students, as we all know, are intelligent, motivated, and inspiring. As a result, they can provide valued advocacy, support, and work when brought together in partnership.

One of my first goals when I formed my office some five years ago was to establish a student leadership team (FGCUScholar Ambassadors) that focused on student research and associated learning gains. At the time, I had only one main goal. I wanted a group of students who could share their thoughts and criticisms. I needed to learn about the culture of undergraduate research on my campus. I knew about my mentees, and I had a general sense about my department. However, I now led a university-wide program, which required me to understand all programs and departments. These students became a window into what was working and what needed improvement, and for that, I said, "thank you."

As you will see in *Fostering Student Leadership*, however, my vision was limited. My student partners became so much more than an advisory panel; they became leaders and collaborators. If it made sense, I could simply tell you about their value and provide some ideas outlining the formation of a student leadership team. However, that approach would be wanting and, ultimately, unsatisfactory. So, instead, I asked two of my most valued student leaders, Arianna and Eddie, to share some of their thoughts about their partnership with an office that supports research, creative, and scholarly opportunities. In the proceeding article, Arianna and Eddie describe some benefits office can expect from a student leadership team as well as strategies to ensure dedication, motivation, and commitment among these students. Thank you, Arianna and Eddie.

Funding for CUREs

Meredith Allison,
Elon University

At Elon University, we are looking for ways to support student learning in classroom-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs). The Undergraduate Research Program currently supports out-of-class independent research experiences through various types of grants and these funds are depleted each year. CUREs are currently supported through the respective departments and deans' offices. The URP is creating a subcommittee to help identify CUREs and to discuss additional funding mechanisms that could be developed to further support undergraduate research happening in classroom settings.

Fostering Student Leadership

Arianna Turello (Nursing) and Eddie Thinger (Anthropology and Political Science), Florida Gulf Coast University

The goals of any office that support student research can be realized met by utilizing the knowledge and unique perspectives of their students. On a campus full of students, there is no better way to foster beneficial relationships between students and faculty than by having a student leadership team; there is incredible value gained from both the office and student leaders through this partnership. For example, the likelihood of buy-in, which leads to successful events, increases when the diversified perspectives given by student leaders, is incorporated into the planning. This allows for a more cohesive event that attracts students while ensuring that office goals are met. Increasing student participation can be accomplished by bridging social and academic environments together, which makes learning fun and will broadening the target audience. Student leaders can also be vital to raising funds for the office by creating a club or registered student organization. Student leaders are then able to advocate for funds from student government that can be allocated towards events, supplies, and food. Clubs can also provide additional resources, like promotion tools, networking, and platforms, to further increase participation. Student leaders also help connect students with faculty. Undergraduate research is about more than just students; it is also about forming student-faculty relationships that promote conversation about research and potentially start lucrative partnerships. Finally, the most valuable piece of having a student leadership team is the honesty you receive; students don't always tell you what you want to hear. Instead, they share the student experience and their needs—the good, the bad, and the ugly.

FGCUScholar Ambassadors after presenting about student leadership at the New Directors Workshop, which preceded the 2019 URP Conference on the campus of The Ohio State University. From left to right: Jackie Chastain, Eddie Thinger, Arianna Turello, and billY Gunnels.

Student Leadership (Continued)

For any leadership program, especially in the beginning, it can be a struggle to get hard-working, dedicated students to take on the extra responsibility and work. Sure—you can pay them. However, there are other ways to ensure that students partner with your effort. To build a solid foundation of student leaders, you need to make sure that they understand that their input is highly valued and will be used. This is accomplished by forming a collaborative relationship with the student. Student leaders emerge when they know that they are being heard. Make sure to take the time to ask questions and listen. The barrier between the faculty and the student is broken down, and a mutually beneficial, sincere partnership is formed when you give the students an audience and fully consider their insights. This partnership relies on the faculty and students being able to communicate in an engaging manner, which allows for strong ideas to evolve. Students will want to engage in the partnership because it can lead to intentional growth for themselves and other students, which in turn benefits the office itself. Ultimately, the work will push and challenge the students, faculty, and office, which forces everyone out of their comfort zones, and at the end of the day, incites joy—best of luck.

CUR White Paper: Recognizing and Valuing Mentoring

Anne Boettcher, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, and Juliane Strauss-Soukup, Creighton University

The CUR Faculty Workload, Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure Taskforce recently completed White Paper No. 2, *Recognizing and Valuing the Mentoring of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity (URSCA) by Faculty Members: Workload, Tenure, Promotion, and Award Systems*, which defines the importance of factoring mentorship of undergraduate research and creative activity into faculty workload, tenure, and promotion, and provides models of practice for faculty and administrators to achieve this. URSCA is a high-impact practice that students at community colleges to primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs) covet. To provide students with these impactful experiences, URSCA must be recognized and valued. The coauthors Janet A. Morrison, John F. Barthell, Anne Boettcher, David Bowne, Cheryl Nixon, Karen K. Resendes, and Juliane Strauss-Soukup identify seven key recommendations:

1. Add valuation of URSCA mentoring and CURE development into mission statements and strategic plans

2. Build mentoring of URSCA apprentices into workload; not overload/pay supplement

3. Rewrite tenure, promotion, and other review documents to clearly value mentoring and CURE development

4. Honor faculty-student collaboration with internal, targeted research funds

5. Provide reassigned time for research-based curricular revision

6. Establish prominent awards/chairs to honor mentoring

7. Institutionalize best practices in training, mentoring, and CUREs

Recognizing and Valuing the Mentoring of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity by Faculty Members: Workload, Tenure, Promotion, and Award Systems

Janet A. Morrison, John F. Barthell, Anne Boettcher, David Bowne, Cheryl Nixon, Karen K. Resendes, and Juliane Strauss-Soukup

CUR White Paper No. 2
Council on Undergraduate Research
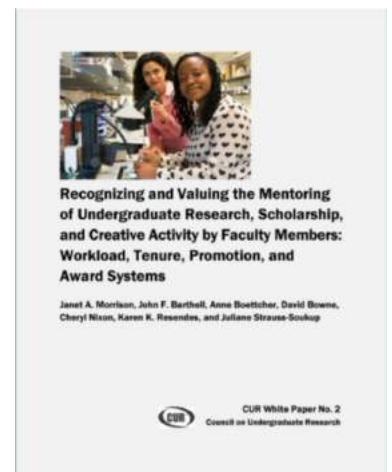
Meet the New URPD Councilors

Tina Zecher, Northern Arizona University

Tina Zecher is the assistant director of undergraduate research and creative activity at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, AZ, where she has been for just over two years. She oversees seven programs that help connect undergraduates to research opportunities across campus. She also has launched a peer mentoring program, assessment aligned to the university's learning outcomes, and a university-wide initiative to capture all undergraduate research activity. She is excited to be a part of such a dynamic group of people who are passionate about the benefits of undergraduate research.

Kara Loy, Thompson Rivers University

Kara Loy is the associate director of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Thompson Rivers University in British Columbia, Canada. She is pursuing an EdD in educational leadership (University of Calgary) and is researching how professors are leading change in Canadian higher education through professional practices and networks. As an educational administrator and elected councillor for CUR, she is interested in leading and supporting transformative research; discovery; and teaching and learning experiences for students, faculty, and staff.

Heather Haeger, California State University, Monterey Bay

Heather Haeger is the educational research associate in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Center (UROC) at California State University, Monterey Bay. She conducts research on educational equity in high-impact practices. She is also serving as the CUR assessment and research coordinator, developing tools for CUR members to conduct their own research and assessment, and is studying the impact of undergraduate research on college retention and completion. She was previously an assistant research faculty member in the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University. She worked on designing, testing, and administering surveys on student engagement, including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Announcements

Congratulations to **Hala ElArarag**, professor of computer science at Stetson University, who was awarded the 2019 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Outstanding Engineering Educator Award. IEEE is the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity.
https://www.ieee.org/

Upcoming Events

CUR Dialogues
Feb. 13–16, 2020
Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
https://www.cur.org/what/events/conferences/dialogues/

NCUR 2020
Mar. 26–28, 2020
Montana State University Bozeman
https://www.cur.org/what/events/students/ncur/

Posters on the Hill
April 20–21, 2020
Washington, DC
https://www.cur.org/what/events/students/poh/

CUR Biennial Conference
June 27–30, 2020
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
https://www.cur.org/what/events/conferences/curconf/2020/

Proposal Writing Institute
July 8–12, 2020
Daemen College, Buffalo, NY
https://www.cur.org/what/events/institutes/pwi/

What Does "Smart" Really Mean?

David Salomon, Christopher Newport University

On this year's MindSet List, the annual compilation of what has always and never been true for the incoming class of first-year students, #54 is "Blackboards have never been dumb." We speak instead of "Smart Boards" (actually a trademarked device) and "smart classrooms." As our boards and classrooms have become "smarter," what has become of us, the learners in those classrooms? The internet seems to increasingly push the boundaries of human memory, with so much information readily accessible to us 24/7. Are we becoming smarter?

We have to begin by defining what we mean when we say "smart." The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) describes those who are smart as "neat, clever, witty." To "smarten up" is to "become more shrewd, wise, intelligent, or aware." An online wiki distinguishes "smart" from "intelligent" this way: "The main difference between intelligent and smart is that smart is an earned status by studying or learning something, and intelligence is something inborn in a person." So one is born intelligent but becomes smart? Perhaps. The OED says an intelligent person is simply one who "receives or takes in information."

So, if smart is defined by studying and learning, are not all college students by definition "smart"? We as human beings are the drivers behind the wheel of the information-filled world in which we live. We can choose to be safe drivers, thoughtful and respectful of ideas and of others, or we can be reckless, spouting off the latest unfiltered drivel that comes across our screen. Either way, boards and classrooms are inanimate objects. We need to dedicate ourselves to the task at-hand—fulfilling our humanity as reflective, active, critical thinkers.