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URPD NewsBriefs Committee:

Wes Lewis, Editor
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, lewisw4@erau.edu

Donna Chamely-Wiik, Vanessa McRae & Suzanne Rocheleau

Division Chair: billy Gunnels,
Florida Gulf Coast University,
cgunnels@fgcu.edu

Council on Undergraduate Research
734 15th Street, NW • Ste 850
Washington, DC 20005
TEL: 202/783-4810
EMAIL: cur@cur.org
WWW: www.cur.org

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Inside This Issue:

- **Mentor Workshop: Facilitating Equity and Inclusion**
- **Meet a New URPD Councilor**
- **Undergraduate Research in the Era of COVID-19**
- **IUPUI's Experiential and Applied Learning Record**
- **Ultimate Truths**

Mentor Workshop: Facilitating Equity and Inclusion for Historically Underrepresented Minority Students in UR

Meredith Allison, Elon University



Buffie Longmire-Avital

Dr. Buffie Longmire-Avital, associate professor of psychology and [Center for Engaged Learning Scholar](#), led a mentor workshop at Elon University on facilitating equity and inclusion for historically underrepresented minority students (HURMs) in undergraduate research (UR). She discussed the importance of undergraduate research to HURMs in terms of their retention rates and following their studies on to the graduate level. But mentors should also focus on what these students can bring to the research and the mentoring relationship. Their perspectives, skills, and experiences can make the research better. Longmire-Avital noted that UR mentors need to use a “critical conscious mentoring framework” when mentoring HURMs. Longmire-Avital’s presentation integrated the theoretical works of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995); Hurtado et al. (2015); Weiston-Serdan (2017); and Yosso (2005). Her synergistic and reparative framework has evolved to include three key components: (1) intentional representation and recruitment, (2) inclusive critical consciousness, and (3) student-generated signature work that is both transportable and capital building for future success within the institution and beyond. Longmire-Avital highlighted four best practices within this framing: (1) the mentor’s continued reflection on the dynamic positionality that occurs within recruitment and mentoring; (2) integration of a community cultural wealth model to evaluate (contextually) HURM student ability, readiness for, and potential contribution to the undergraduate research experience; (3) a view of student-generated signature work from HURMS as a reparative practice in acknowledgment of historical inequity in higher educational spaces; and (4) nurture of a state of mutual vulnerability that prioritizes the need for self-care for both the student and the faculty mentor.

continued on page 3

Meet a New URPD Councilor



Tim O'Neil, University of Colorado Boulder

Tim O'Neil is the assistant director of special undergraduate enrichment programs at the University of Colorado Boulder, where he leads a mixed-format tutorial series called the “Curiosity Lab” for the Norlin and Boettcher Scholars and manages university-wide funding in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). On the steering committee for the Inclusive Community of Practice, he works to broaden participation in high-impact practices. With the “Lightbulb Moment” storytelling initiative, he promotes narrative thinking as a conceptual pathway into the academic and creative life of the university.

Undergraduate Research in the Era of COVID-19

Charles (billy) Gunnels, Florida Gulf Coast University

As I am reminded every time that I entered my password over the past two months, “COVID-19 sucks!” On that note, I hope that your family and relations are well. We all share a great concern for our loved ones. If you have been sickened or care for those who suffer, then my thoughts are with you. But as we all know, this virus is so much more than the biological and health issues that plague the infected. This virus has destabilized us to our very core. In just one semester, we have become a different community—a community with a new language, new social norms, new anxieties, and new expectations.

This virus and our collective response affected every aspect of our society, including higher education and undergraduate research. Each of our experiences has been individual, but I would imagine that you can see parallels in my own story. Over spring break, my campus rushed research students back from Italy. I was sad for the students, and I wanted the response to be an overreaction; it was not. On the following Wednesday afternoon, the school announced we would transition to online education, starting Monday. That gave me, and every other faculty member, just five days to convert our face-to-face classes to a virtual format. That weekend, I tried Microsoft Teams—yuck. I tried Canvas Conversations—ugh. I gave Zoom a shot, and it was ok. So, we Zoomed. At 7:30 am, I met with my first of three classes. To my surprise, the students discovered an immediate benefit to online education—at least half lay in bed at the start of class. Similar to everyone else, we made this educational transition work. It may not have been glorious, but it worked.

However, teaching was only half the issue. I still needed to determine how (and whether) my campus could support undergraduate research. For many, this may not have been an issue as others—governors, university presidents, or bosses—made the decision unnecessary by canceling these opportunities for students and faculty mentors. I am sorry if that was your experience. My campus, fortunately, retained some efforts. For each initiative, we had to first develop a virtual plan and then request permission from the provost. We experienced successes. For example, my school hosted a brilliant “virtual” alternative to our Community-Engagement & Research Day. The student presentations were excellent, and it was one of the best-attended events in years.

continued on page 4

IUPUI's Experiential and Applied Learning Record

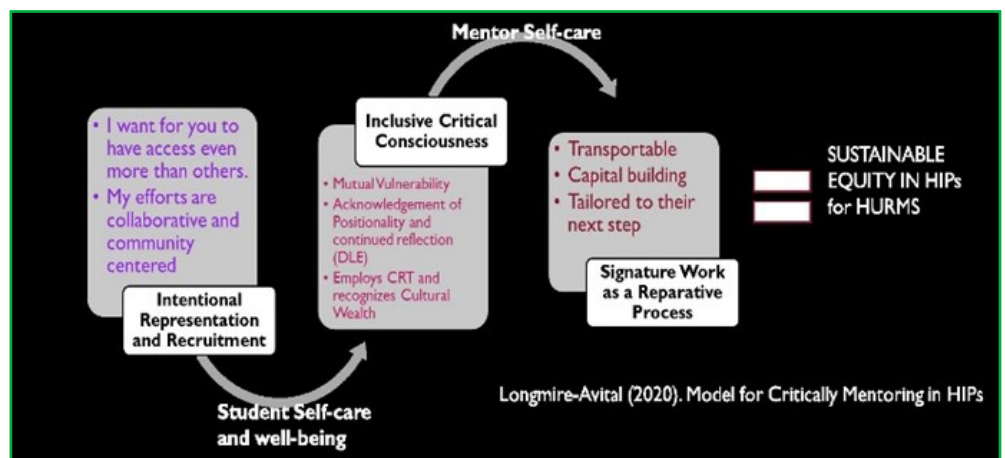
Dominique Galli, Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

Although the academic transcript continues to have merit as a record of courses taken toward degree completion and although it will continue to be the record of choice for admission to graduate school, many institutions across the country have taken various steps to provide other types of documents to bridge the gap between potential employer and student. In recent years, IUPUI (Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis) has developed an additional record of student achievement, the Experiential and Applied Learning Record (the “Record”). The intent of this new transcript is to showcase engaged learning experiences, including but not limited to undergraduate research, civic engagement activities, and study abroad experiences inside and outside the classroom. The “Record” provides students a better way to market themselves by giving them a tool to articulate their experience and related learning to employers and others. Any information added to this comprehensive record goes through a sound screening and verification process to determine which experiences should be added and to assure validity of the experiences and appropriate representation on the academic record. The IUPUI Center for Research and Learning (CRL) participated in the development of the “Record.” Any student who completes one or more undergraduate research experiences sponsored by CRL receives an entry that lists the number of hours dedicated to research as well as the semester in which the activity took place.

To view a sample version of the Record, go to: https://getengaged.iupui.edu/files/docs/sampleunofficial_2.4.19.pdf

Mentor Workshop (Continued from page 1)

Longmire-Avital emphasized the need for mentors to focus on helping students expand upon capital that can be transported elsewhere after the experience is over. A line on a resume or transcript is not enough—mentors should encourage these students to present their work in multiple venues and publish their collaborative work in professional venues like peer-reviewed journals, in addition to pursuing graduate work. This kind of signature work will help the student succeed at the institution and beyond. Finally, Longmire-Avital emphasized the importance of transdisciplinary partnerships and institutional support for this sustained reach.



Model for Critically Mentoring in HIPs (Longmire-Avital 2020).

Announcements

Congratulations to **Wes Lewis** for the recent promotion to director of undergraduate research at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University–Daytona Beach.

The University of Missouri Columbia has a new assistant director in the Office of Undergraduate Research: **Dr. Sarah Humfeld**. Humfeld completed her PhD in biology at MU and then served as a postdoc/research specialist for several years mentoring undergraduates. Most recently, she was an academic adviser and instructor in the School of Natural Resources at MU.

Upcoming Events

CUR Dialogues
February 2021
Washington, DC
<https://www.cur.org/what/events/conferences/dialogues/past/>

Posters on the Hill
April 2021
Washington, DC
<https://www.cur.org/what/events/students/poh/>

Undergraduate Research Week
April 19-23, 2021
<https://www.cur.org/resources/urw/upcoming/>

Era of COVID-19 (Continued from page 2)

We also experienced failures. At the onset of COVID-19, I became concerned about student employment because of a local economy based on tourism. It was clear that these students would not find work over the summer. Despite every effort, I was unable to retain our summer research program and, therefore, failed to employ students. My administration froze all purchases and hires to safeguard the campus from future budget cuts. While disappointed for the students, I understood and supported the decision.

We sometimes describe the virus and our response to it as a “new normal,” which leaves me confused. COVID-19 has undoubtedly created a new reality, but this reality is not normal—at least not yet. As a result, I find myself grappling with new expectations and challenges—experiences that we all share. Since the onset of COVID-19, we have met virtually on multiple occasions with different groups that have helped us reflect and plan. Later this summer, we will again have the chance to meet—virtually—at the Biennial Conference. In all cases, we need to support this different and emerging community for the benefit of our students, faculty, institutions, and ourselves.

Calls for Proposals, Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research (SPUR)

[“Undergraduate Research during Times of Disruption”](#)
(ongoing theme; proposal deadline June 22, 2020)

Fall 2021 SPUR: [“Undergraduate Research and Climate Change”](#)
(proposal deadline July 27, 2020)



Interested in serving as a manuscript reviewer for SPUR?

Please send an email to SPUR@cur.org indicating areas of interest/expertise (e.g., assessment). Experience with qualitative/quantitative methods is especially desired.

Ultimate Truths

David Salomon, Christopher Newport University

At a 2014 forum held at MIT, novelist and philosopher Rebecca Goldstein offered a definition of science as the “best means of telling us what is.” Science, she said, has developed a technique for getting nature to “answer us back” and correct our faulty intuitions. She defined the humanities as an “exploration of ... inwardness,” an investigation of “an inner world of subjectivity” formed by memories, emotions, and intuitions. She noted that science requires philosophical arguments, but in her view, philosophy does not fit with the experimental sciences or the humanities. Goldstein views philosophy as “a technique that tries to maximize coherence.”

The Buddhist doctrine of two truths posits two levels of *satya* or truth: “conventional” truth and “ultimate” truth. Conventional truth describes our daily experiences in the world while ultimate truth deals with ultimate reality empty of concrete characteristics. The Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna, who lived from about 150–250 CE, held that “the ultimate truth is that there is no ultimate truth.” In a 1930 meeting with Albert Einstein, the Indian philosopher and poet Rabindranath Tagore said, “Beauty is in the ideal of perfect harmony which is in the Universal Being; Truth the perfect comprehension of the Universal Mind. We individuals approach it through our own mistakes and blunders, through our accumulated experiences, through our illumined consciousness—how, otherwise, can we know Truth?” Einstein disagreed, arguing that “Truth must be conceived as a Truth that is valid independent of humanity.”

This is telling because it points to the humanities and the sciences as both interested in “ultimate truths.” The methods used to arrive at those truths differ in significant ways, but the increasing trans- and interdisciplinary focus of research reflects the increasing recognition that collaboration is probably key. While the scientist often works in an experimental lab setting on a team, the humanist most often works solitary with the library as his or her lab. We need to develop mutual respect and understanding for the different modes of work, acknowledging that there are “more things in heaven and earth” than any of us can dream of.

HOW TO Train Undergraduates in Research Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research

Julio F. Turrens with Michael S. Springer
Foreword by Anne Boettcher

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