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September 30, 2022

Social Sciences Divisional Newsletter**A Publication of a Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research****Winter 2021**

The Social Sciences Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research provides networking opportunities, activities, and resources to assist social sciences administrators, faculty members, students, practitioners, and others in advancing undergraduate research.

Chair: [Leslie Cecil](#) (Stephen F. Austin State University)

Follow the division on [Twitter](#).

Welcome from the Chair

It is a great honor to be elected by my fellow Social Sciences Division Councilors as division chair. I began my three-year term in July 2020. So much has changed in this world that has affected all our lives in general and specifically as researchers and mentors. I am a professor of anthropology at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) in east Texas (Nacogdoches, TX). At SFA, I also help organize and produce the campus undergraduate research conference with two other colleagues. It seems that, if there is a committee with CUR, URC, or a committee with any combination of those letters, I am on it!

I am passionate about undergraduate research and giving students the opportunity to get their hands dirty—literally. I am an archaeologist by training, and I always tell my students that they don't really know if they want to be an archaeologist until they spend a summer outside in the heat with the bugs. It isn't like Indiana Jones. I am sure that you feel the same way in your chosen field, too. Affording students a hands-on experience is invaluable for student recruitment and retention. I know that I am preaching to the choir here.

CUR has many opportunities for mentors and students alike. Please see the information in this newsletter for many opportunities, awards, and funding opportunities for students attending a conference this year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at cecillg@sfasu.edu (there are two Ls in that email address).

Leslie Cecil

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Social Sciences Chair

Stephen F. Austin State University

Excellence in Mentoring UR in the Social Sciences Award: 2021 Call for Nominations

CUR's Social Sciences Division has opened nominations for the 2021 Excellence in Mentoring Undergraduate Research in the Social Sciences award. **Nominations close on March 1, 2021.** This award aims to recognize outstanding mentors of undergraduate research in the social sciences for their role in supporting, encouraging and promoting a positive and inclusive scholarly and teaching environment, and for contributing to the professional and personal development of undergraduate students within or outside their research or degree programs. [Check out the award website to learn about the nomination procedure and the eligibility criteria >>](#)

2020 Recipient of the Excellence in Mentoring UR in the Social Sciences Award: Marsha Walton



Dr. Walton took me under her wing as a first-year student at Rhodes. I was shy and unsure of myself. The invitation to join her research lab made me feel empowered and valued as a student. Dr. Walton's mentorship, nurturance, and true passion for her work inspired and empowered me. She has been the single most influential figure in my academic career. –Dr. Janna Miller, '07

The Social Sciences Division of the Council on Undergraduate Research is proud to announce the recipient of the 2020 Excellence in Mentoring Undergraduate Research in the Social Sciences Award: Dr. Marsha Walton (Rhodes College). Walton earned her BA in psychology with honors and her PhD in developmental psychology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests focus on the moral and social development of children. She has mentored more than 50 undergraduate researchers and co-authored more than 12 publications with students, and her mentees have presented their work at numerous conferences.

As an active researcher with undergraduate students, Walton not only develops students' social sciences skills but also is concerned with their personal development as lifelong learners. She has mentored more than 40 undergraduates who have gone on graduate school—quite a feat for any mentor! Katherine White (her department chair) states:

[Dr. Walton is] passionate about engaging students in social science research; is committed to helping students develop their own interests, skills, and projects; supports students' intellectual, professional, and personal development; is a champion for her students (especially those who come from marginalized communities and backgrounds) as they pursue their own career goals; and finds personal joy in all of these important pieces of what we understand to be a mentor.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: What It Means to Me

CUR has five main goals outlined in its [2020–2025 strategic plan](#). One focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This goal is very timely and appropriate given the world in which we currently live (and keeping an eye on the past as well). This goal encourages/charges us to “develop a culture and community that actively prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion.” The Social Sciences Division is uniquely positioned to address this strategic goal, as many of us focus on this area as part of our teaching, research, and lives. Here are some thoughts from a few of the division's Councilors about what DEI means to them.

Sonja Trent-Brown (Psychology)

Chief Officer for Culture and Inclusion, Hope College

DEI engages the intersectionalities of social identities, voices, and perspectives that represent an organization, institution, community, or society. This is important so that equity, equality, and nondiscrimination are infused throughout the organizational, institutional, and societal systems; power



structures; policies; processes; and practices in a manner that recognizes and celebrates the humanity and dignity of every human being and that values their talents and contributions. As academics, we have learned how to pursue knowledge, and each day, we have the opportunity to choose to invest in informing ourselves in DEI so that we continue to grow. We also have the potential for our scholarship to make an impact in process, content, or outcomes. As a human being, I have the opportunity to listen actively, use my voice; advocate; stand with others; and practice empathy, vulnerability, authenticity, and courage. As an African American woman, my lived experience has led me to recognize the importance of making sure that voices are fully represented, informed, and valued at the table; of truly hearing one another; of listening for understanding; and of acting with intentionality.

Femi Odebiyi (Business Administration)

LCC International University

Just like the way interdisciplinary study brings together two or more disciplines to collaborate and construct a more comprehensive understanding of the issue being addressed, DEI to me is creating a safe space that is devoid of favoritism or discrimination for the purpose of doing meaningful work with people who don't look like me, talk like me, or even think like me.



Jennifer Edwards (Communication Studies)

Tarleton State University

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to the higher education landscape. These principles should be embedded in our virtual and traditional learning environments. As I think about my roles as a Councilor and an academic, DEI is the reason why I continue to integrate undergraduate research into my work each semester. Undergraduate research enables faculty to reach all students while emphasizing the importance of ethics and equipping all students with professional skills that they integrate in their future career. When we introduce our students to the undergraduate research experience, they are able to learn about themselves, expand their worldview, and effectively communicate with others.



In June 2021, CUR will host a virtual conference focusing on DEI called Centering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity. The Undergraduate Research Programs Division and the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion presents a step in response to the national call for awareness and action on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This biennial URPD conference, will serve as a platform, explore facilitative approaches, and promote the exploration and adoption of effective tools for change. This conference will support the undergraduate research enterprise, including mentors, administrators, faculty, and industry partners. **The call for abstracts closes on March 1, 2021. For more information about the conference, visit the conference webpage >>**

Resources for Mentors in Social Sciences

Coedited Edition on Undergraduate Research and Transformative Learning

Jeanetta Sims and Doreen Sams, Councilors in the Social Sciences Division, coedited a special issue on undergraduate research and transformative learning for *The Journal of Transformative Learning* (Vol. 5/ No. 2, 2018). Visit the SSD website for information about how to access the articles.

This issue includes the following articles:

- Undergraduate Research as Generative Metaphor: A Provocation by John Tagg
- Transformative Pre-Research Mentorship Design: Jump-Starting Undergraduate Research Experience in Molecular Biology by Y. Ellen France
- Innovation in Preservice Teacher Preparation: Undergraduate Research in Special Education by Kymberly Harris, Meca Williams-Johnson, and Dana Sparkman
- Barriers to Transformative Learning in Undergraduate Research: Helping Student Researchers to Embrace the Hurdles by Sarah B Lovern
- Transformative Learning in Client-Based Research Projects by Karl Robert, Bruce Schmitt, Lissa Yogan, and Adali Johnson
- The Role of Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experiences in Extending Transformative Learning to All Students by Amy B. Henderson and Emek Kose

Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research: CUR Journal

CUR has a peer-reviewed journal for the publication of articles about best practices in undergraduate research. It's a wonderful resource for anyone interested in becoming a master teacher of undergraduate research.

Please consider submitting an article about your experience of mentoring undergraduate research, so that you can share the insight that you have learned over the years with other academics. There are currently two Calls for Proposals:

- **"Expanded Directions in Community-Based Undergraduate Research"** (deadline March 1, 2021)
- **"Undergraduate Research during Times of Disruption"** (ongoing).

If you are interested in reviewing manuscripts for SPUR, please send an email to SPUR@cur.org and indicate areas of expertise (e.g., assessment). Inquiries about reviewing books for SPUR may be directed to Nicholas J. Rowland, book review editor. For more information, check out SPUR on the CUR website.

CUR Social Sciences Undergraduate Conference Presentation Awards

The CUR Social Sciences Division is offering a limited number of 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 (in person or virtually) during the academic year 2020–2021. In addition, awards will be set aside for students attending (also virtually) an international conference as well as NCUR. If they are not used, they will be given to students on the waiting list.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Undergraduate students at any level can apply, but preference will be given to students attending two-year institutions and third- and fourth-year undergraduates.
- Either the student's mentor must be a CUR member or the student's home institution must be a CUR institutional member.
- Students must be engaged in research in the social sciences, defined by the Economic and Social Research Council as research concerned with the "study of society and the manner in which people behave and influence the world around us" and utilizing empirical, quantitative, and/or qualitative methods.

For more information, including the link to apply, check out the [award page](#). If you have questions, please contact Andrea Karkowski at akarkows@capital.edu.

CUR Events for Mentors

CUR Conversations: Advocating for UR in a New Administration

February 24, 2021, 12:00 - 1:00 PM ET [Members Only]

CUR Conversations: Resources and Support for Virtual Mentoring

February 25, 2021, 1:00 - 2:00 PM ET [Members Only]

CUR Book Club | [Virtual] February 24, 2021, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET [Members Only]

CUR Conversations: Moving from Promoting Diversity to Promoting Anti-Racism in UR Spaces

March 5, 2021, 2:00 - 4:00 PM ET [Member Only]

CUR Book Club | [Virtual] March 17, 2021, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET [Members Only]

CUR Book Club | [Virtual] April 7, 2021, 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET [Members Only]

National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) | April 12 - 14, 2021

Undergraduate Research Week | April 19-23, 2021

Posters on the Hill (POH) | April 27-28, 2021

Check out our [Social Sciences Page](#) on CUR's Website



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