



COUNCIL ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

## **2023-2024 Elections**

### **Health Sciences Division: Division Representative Slate**

**Position Purpose:** The work of Divisions is done by Division Representatives who advance undergraduate research by providing networking opportunities, activities, and educational content. Their aim is to create and foster community and value within the organization. Representatives support the members of their division in activities and programs that align with the CUR strategic plan, mission, vision, and values.

#### **Needed Qualifications:**

- Familiar with CUR and it's mission
- Passionate about or had mentor experience in undergraduate research
- Showcases thought leadership in undergraduate research
- CUR Membership (once elected)
- Previous volunteer experience, not required but

*There are 2 individuals running.*

*You may vote for both candidates presented to be elected as representatives for this division.*

*This division will also be accepting write-In candidates for this election cycle.*

Candidate information is presented on the following pages. Click on each candidate name below to be taken to their Information In the document.

- [Leann Laubach](#)
- [Huda Makhluf](#)

## Leann Laubach, University of Central Oklahoma

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### *Health Sciences Division Nominee*

#### **NOMINEE STATEMENTS**

##### **Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.**

I have taught undergraduate nursing research since 2011. In that time I have assisted approximately 100 students each year as they develop proposals for their capstone projects. While not all of the students are able to carry out their projects, many do and I am always honored when they chose me to be their mentor.

##### **In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCA?**

As a faculty member I encourage all students to get involved in the research process. As a current member of the Health Science Division we as a group have fostered DEI in all of our council activities as the ability to conduct research has no limitations.

##### **How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?**

As the division's immediate past chair I have promoted round tables, the development of a mentor award, and lead the charge to develop educational materials for the division. Additionally I wrote a chapter on Research in the Health Sciences for the Cambridge Handbook on Undergraduate Research.

##### **If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?**

I served as the division chair for 4 consecutive years as well as serving the larger CUR committee on the program evaluation committee.

# Huda MakhluF, National University

## Health Sciences Division Nominee

### NOMINEE STATEMENTS

#### Please comment on your involvement in undergraduate research activities in the context of your institution and its mission.

As an educator and scientist in higher ed, I always strive to provide my students with meaningful learning experiences centered on cutting-edge science discoveries. Getting them excited about science means constantly engaging them with hands-on activities. As partners with Tiny Earth at the University of Wisconsin <https://tinyearth.wisc.edu/>, the Dept. has adapted that research-based framework to a microbiology course and its lab. Students collect soil samples from various locations in Southern California and perform antibiotic discovery research while learning culture techniques, research methodology, data collection, and analysis. These inquiry-based activities, which are high-impact educational practices, lead to increased student satisfaction, learning, and success. My students are discovering new antibiotic isolates from soil samples. I just finished teaching a microbiology class for pre-nursing and pre-allied health students with embedded authentic undergraduate research opportunities into its laboratory component. So far, this past term, we have found three promising antibiotic producers from various soil samples in Southern California. A couple of students will be presenting their findings at NCUR 2024 this Spring.

#### In what ways have you helped promote diversity and inclusion in URSCA?

I currently serve as a core member of the Howard Hughes Medical Investigation (HHMI) Learning Community Cluster on Inclusive Excellence in Science. I had the honor of participating in crafting the pre-proposal of the HHMI grant in 2017. I understand the critical importance of making science education more inclusive for non-traditional students, first-generation students, and transfer students. My students currently have a median age of 34 and are 25% Hispanic/Latinx, 12% African American, 7% Asian, and 25% Caucasian/White. Roughly 60% of the student body identifies as female, and approximately 32% are affiliated with the military. I am committed to providing an exceptional student experience to our truly diverse community of learners and to upholding the core values of diversity and access. Each learner is unique. I provide access to stellar research opportunities to all my students in microbiology; as a class and community, we recognize, welcome, and celebrate the myriad differences that contribute to the diversity of intellect, thought, and expression within the class.

#### How do you anticipate your skills will help successfully uphold the Division Representative charge?

I have been a CUR Council Member since 2016. As part of my cumulative service to CUR, I have 1) reviewed Poster on the Hills submissions, 2) served on the assessment task force committee, and 3) co-wrote with fellow councilors a CUR White Paper entitled: "Undergraduate Research: A Road Map for Meeting Future National Needs and Competing in a World of Change", providing strong evidence for the role of undergraduate research in college completion and preparation of a highly skilled workforce, particularly in STEM fields. I have mentored many undergraduate and graduate students, and still deploy authentic research experiences in my laboratory courses. In addition, I volunteer as a Faculty Judge for the Southern California American Society for Microbiology (SC-ASM) Educator's Session and Student Symposium, is a member of the San Diego STEM Ecosystem at the Reuben Fleet Center and Women in STEM group (Role Model Initiative) in San Diego.

At the division level, I served with fellow councilors, reviewing, and editing the call for travel awards documents, as well as scoring submissions for the NCUR Health Sci travel awards. It is always great connecting with peers and contributing ideas at our CUR division meetings, and I look forward to working with the CUR DEI Committee Kick-Off Meeting this coming January 8th.

**If you have served a previous term as Division Representative (previously Division Councilor), are there any particular contributions during your previous term(s) that you would like to highlight?**

I crafted the HS Mentor Evaluation Form and Rubric for reviewing and scoring submissions for the NCUR Health Sci travel awards. I helped with reviewing and scoring HS Mentor Award Applicants as well. Thank you sincerely for considering my application for re-election.