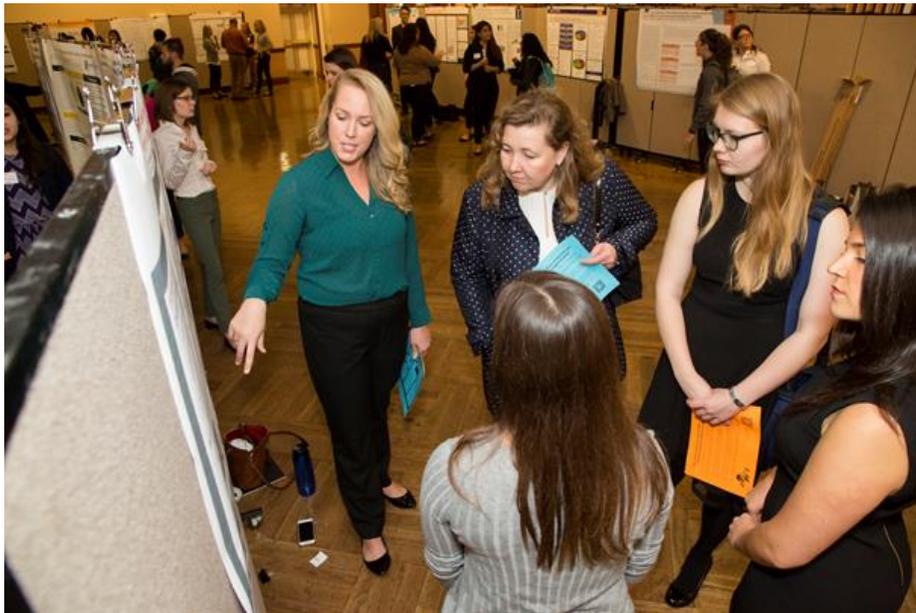


2016-17 ANNUAL REPORT  
**OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS



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## **The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) – Governance, Structure, and Personnel**

The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) at the University of Illinois was created on 16 August 2012 and reports to the Provost's Office. The Director is expected to carry out normal faculty research and service activities as well as reduced classroom instruction responsibilities. In 2016-2017, the Associate Director also served as (25%) Interim Director. The Associate Director also serves as Program Director for the Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI) program. OUR was also assisted by a 67% time graduate research assistant who serves as OUR's Program Coordinator, and a 10 hour per week social media undergraduate intern for the full academic year. EUI is assisted by a 50% time graduate assistant, through an arrangement with the Department of Anthropology. Weekly planning meetings are held between the Interim Director and the staff.

An Advisory Board, consisting of representatives from colleges with significant undergraduate enrollments and from units that facilitate undergraduate research, counsels OUR on a number of initiatives. EUI's Executive Committee, made up of program stakeholders, assists the Program Director in accomplishing EUI's mission in an effective way.

### **OUR/EUI Personnel**

Director (Interim) and Associate Director: Dr. Karen Rodriguez'G  
Program Director, EUI: Dr. Karen Rodriguez'G  
Graduate Research Assistant (OUR): Christopher Holmes  
Graduate Research Assistant (EUI): David Aristizábal  
Undergraduate Intern: Shelby Gordon

### **2016-17 OUR Advisory Board**

Robert Baird, Associate Director, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning  
Merinda Hensley, Assistant Professor, University Library  
Lois Hoyer, Professor, Pathobiology; Associate Dean for Research and Advanced Studies,  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Lydia Khuri, Program Director, Housing & Residential Life  
Natasha Mamaril, Coordinator of Undergraduate Research, Engineering Administration  
John Randolph, Associate Professor, History  
Elizabeth Rockman, Associate Director, Campus Honors Program  
Sela Sar, Associate Professor, Advertising (Fall 2016)<sup>1</sup>  
Robert Schooley, Assistant Professor, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (Fall 2016)  
Cory Suski, Associate Professor, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (Spring 2017)<sup>2</sup>  
Patrick Vargas, Associate Professor, Advertising (Spring 2017)

### **EUI Executive Committee**

Merinda Hensley, Assistant Professor, University Library and Instructional Services Librarian  
Ellen Moodie, Associate Professor, Anthropology

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<sup>1</sup> Served as sabbatical replacement for Patrick Vargas.

<sup>2</sup> Served as sabbatical replacement for Robert Schooley.

Isabel Scarborough, Associate Professor, Parkland College  
*Ex-Officio*: Brenda Farnell, Professor and Interim Head of Anthropology

## **OUR Philosophy Statement**

OUR is guided by the philosophy that all Illinois undergraduate students should learn about current disciplinary research, take part in research discussions, and be exposed to research experiences in their regular coursework. Furthermore, where practical, an advanced research experience should be among the capstone options in all major programs of study. Undergraduate research and creative inquiry opportunities should be designed to support the educational goals and research mission of the University, advancing its commitment to innovative research and scholarship with global impact.

## **OUR Goals**

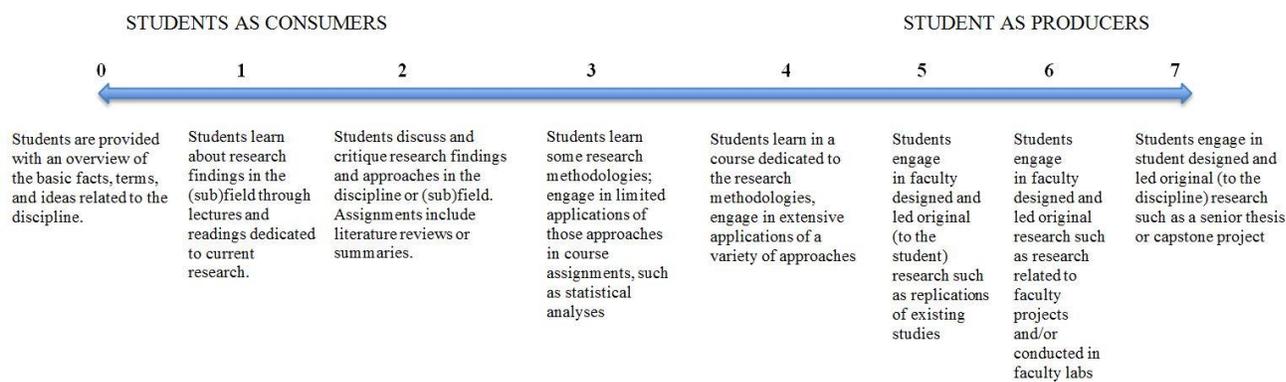
To achieve its mission, OUR seeks to:

- Coordinate and nurture undergraduate research efforts across campus;
- Inspire students and faculty to collaborate on research projects and foster a research mentoring environment that encourages and rewards collaboration;
- Assist faculty and staff in the development, assessment, and evaluation of undergraduate research opportunities, as part of curricular components, mentorship programs, internships, independent study, and co-curricular opportunities;
- Establish sound practices for students to develop research experience and skills regardless of discipline and time to degree;
- Work to create a culture of discovery across campus to support undergraduate research opportunities and encourage an atmosphere where students are colleagues and partners in research;
- Garner internal and external partnerships and financial support for undergraduate research;
- Encourage the creation and manage implementation of new opportunities for undergraduate research on campus;
- Disseminate best practices and models for undergraduate research to campus stakeholders;
- Serve as a primary conduit for archiving and enhancing the awareness of undergraduate research efforts among campus stakeholders and external audiences; and
- Allocate supplemental research support funding, as available and applicable.

## **Definition of Undergraduate Research**

The National Council on Undergraduate Research defines undergraduate research as “an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student who makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.” OUR considers this definition to be better understood as aspirational and that undergraduate research is best represented as a continuum as noted in the chart below, created by our office:

# A Continuum of Undergraduate Research



This is the fifth annual report of OUR and covers activities in the period from 1 June 2016 through 1 June 2017.

## **EXTANT PROGRAMS**

OUR continued and/or expanded a number of programs from the previous academic year:

### **Undergraduate Research Week and Symposium**

*Undergraduate Research Week (URW)*. This is the fifth year of the URW, an expansion of the signature undergraduate research showcase on campus, the Undergraduate Research Symposium. URW events included research/career workshops, poster sessions, exhibits, performances, and oral presentations organized jointly by OUR and various units. As we have done in previous years, special effort was directed toward expanding URW events to include units in the humanities and fine arts, and those in which venues were more appropriate to the presentations of student research (e.g., performance or exhibit spaces) and closer to potential audiences. Units sponsoring URW events included: The Career Center, Department of English, Living-Learning Communities Researchers Initiative, College of Fine & Applied Arts, Ethnography of the University Initiative, Department of Anthropology, Department of Economics, Department of Political Science, School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics, the Center for Translation Studies, and the IPRH-Mellon BioHumanities Undergraduate Research Collaborative.

*Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS)*. The URS has been held annually on campus since 2008. As in past years, workshops for participants conducted by the University Library were retained, as were several advertising efforts in local media and university web outlets. New advertising, with both digital ads and building signage in the Illini Union, was also added. Due to a newly created database and earlier solicitation, this year we had a record number (164) of faculty, post-doctoral scholars, university staff, and graduate students participate as judges at URS sessions and URW events. Along with representatives from our corporate sponsors, judges

interacted with student presenters and provided feedback on student presentations to help OUR select award winners. Final award decisions, however, were made by OUR staff.

As indicated in Figures 1 and 2 below, URW has seen both a substantial increase in the number of posters, performances, exhibits, and oral presentations (including the URS) (Figure 1), and total number of students participating; many research projects had multiple authors (Figure 2).

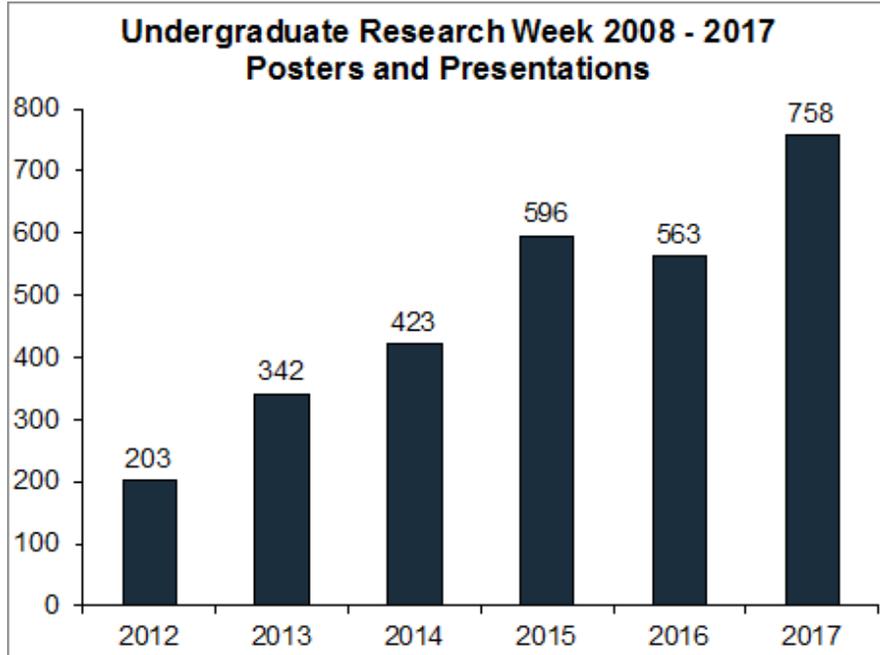


Figure 1: Number of URS/URW posters, performances, videos, and oral presentations, 2012-2017<sup>3</sup>

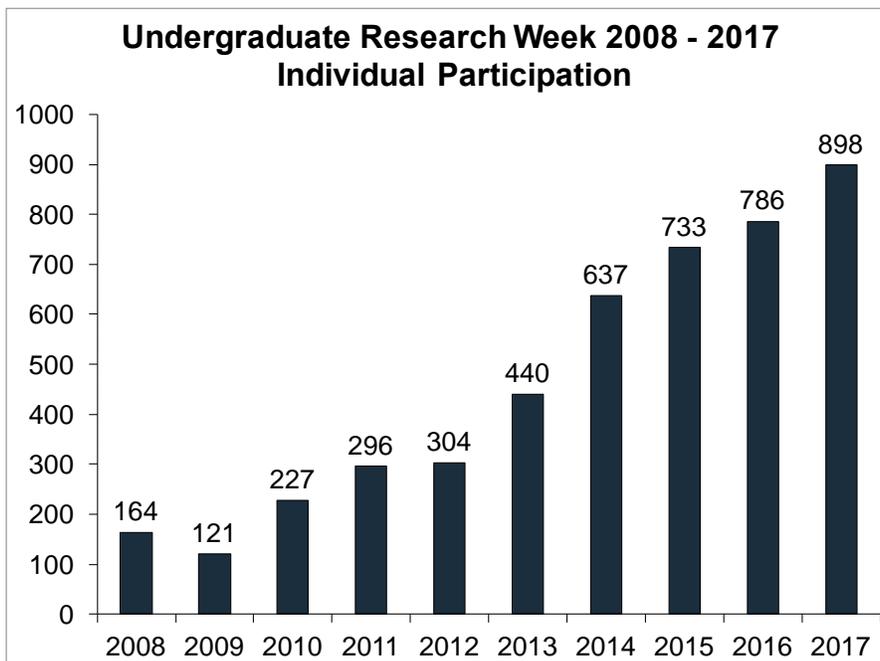


Figure 2: Individual URS Participation, 2008-2017<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 2015 and 2016 numbers include events during URW as well as the URS.

<sup>4</sup> 2015 and 2016 numbers include events during URW as well as URS.

Highlights of the URS included featured lunchtime presentations from students in Chemistry, Molecular & Cellular Biology, Electrical Engineering and Engineering Physics, and Journalism, representing the range of undergraduate research on the UI campus. In addition, OUR displayed submitted entries in the [Image of Research](#) competition sponsored by the University Library; this is now a regular component of the URS. As begun last year, corporate sponsor booths were included, allowing for an all day and directed engagement between students and our corporate partners. We continue to streamline and reconfigure the submission process, including a longer timeline for student submissions; the coordination of URW events and URS within the database; an end to late submissions, and a new judge database which allowed us to more than triple participation.

Efforts to encourage participation from historically underrepresented units, including FAA, have proved successful, with growth in participation in both the URS and program/unit events during URW.

The full URW program for AY 2016-17 as well as programs from previous years can be found [here](#).

### **Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI)**

In January 2014, EUI joined OUR, but the former has a long and distinguished history. Under the leadership of Nancy Abelmann, EUI (<http://www.eui.illinois.edu>) was created more than a decade ago and has provided a pioneering approach to teaching and learning focused on promoting student research on universities and colleges. A unique national model, EUI is an integral and critical part of OUR's mission to support undergraduate research across our campus, both in terms of innovative pedagogy and critical student engagement. Across a range of disciplines, students in EUI-affiliated courses begin to see themselves as researchers and contributors to academic discourse. Using a variety of methodologies, including human subject research (enabled by an umbrella IRB amended each semester), students examine the university in its broader social, political, and historical contexts.

Since its founding, EUI has worked with over 175 affiliated courses across six colleges and seventeen departments at the UI (and at six additional colleges and universities). To date, more than 4,000 students have participated, with over 1,000 student projects and presentations subsequently archived in UI's digital repository, Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship (IDEALS). EUI has held twenty-four (biannual) student conferences and has produced a dissertation, a number of senior honors' theses and capstone projects, as well as over 15 articles and presentations highlighting EUI. A 2013 special issue devoted to EUI in *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences* is available online [here](#).

During the 2016-17 academic year, there were six courses affiliated with EUI (not including two Centennial High School seminars), serving approximately 350 students. Number of courses for this academic year were down, due mainly to our pilot affiliation of a larger lecture/discussion. EUI courses typically are capped at 25 students, though we have allowed up to 75 student course participation where students work in groups. Given the number of students in the course (over 200), even working in groups, this pilot presented a significant challenge for the instructor and teaching assistants, and EUI staff. We were, however, able to work out some significant kinks and are prepared to incorporate large lecture classes at least once per year.

Administrative support for EUI continues to be a challenge and, therefore, affects the number of courses we manage in each academic year.

At the end of each semester, students had the opportunity to present their research at the biannual conference; the spring semester event is part of URW. In assisting these courses, the Program Director (with support from EUI's RA) recruited, trained, and supported faculty and students in the use of Moodle, Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols, multimedia tools, and curriculum development.

EUI also continued its outreach efforts beyond the classes it sponsors, seeking to reach different constituencies, including the expansion of its community engagement with regional high schools. The partnership with Centennial High School (Champaign) brought juniors and seniors from teacher Lindsay Aikman's social justice seminar. Centennial students presented research projects based upon UC Berkeley's Youth-Led Participatory Action Research program ([YPAR](#)), where students identify and research issues of importance to their communities and institutions.

As invited representative of both EUI and OUR constituencies, Dr. Rodriguez'G continues to work with Prairie Futures, an Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (IPRH) research cluster on Midwestern innovation and interdisciplinary design developments and pedagogy.

#### Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP)

A collaboration between OUR and Graduate College, URAP is now in its second year. URAP offers an opportunity for first and second-year undergraduate students (including transfer students) to gain undergraduate research experience while working under the direct supervision of advanced graduate students. Applications were open to both domestic and international students; students were asked to provide a statement of interest speaking to why they were interested in participating in the program, and provide a brief essay outlining their top 3 choices of graduate mentor. Selected undergraduate apprentices had the opportunity to conduct and learn the research process through a one-on-one research experience with a graduate student mentor. Underserved students in the humanities, social sciences, and fine and applied arts were particularly encouraged to apply. We did, however, accept applications from students in all disciplines. Applications from undergraduate students essentially doubled from our pilot year; we had 169 applications for 10 undergraduate student spots.

Graduate student mentors participated in a series of mentoring best practice workshops during the Fall semester, with monthly meetings during the Spring. This academic year we converted from a structure of paid undergraduate internships to flexible course credit (2-3 units). Undergraduate students worked with their graduate mentors up to 6 hours per week, and attended class (Introduction to Undergraduate Research) with OUR staff on a biweekly basis. After an end of the semester evaluation by both students and OUR staff, the content of the course will be expanded in subsequent academic years to allow for weekly (as opposed to biweekly) meetings. A mentoring certificate has been developed for both current and future graduate student participants, and is issued by Grad College. There is currently no such offering through Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning.

As evidenced by the doubling of applications, this program is wildly successful. Students with little or no research experience developed as both researchers and scholars, building confidence to present and publish their work. Rather than a separate URW event, URAP students presented during the URS. Given our success and the overwhelming interest by students, we

hope to grow the numbers of students able to participate each academic year. As a course credit model rather than paid internship, URAP has the potential to include significantly more graduate/undergraduate mentoring partnerships. We remain painfully aware, however, that such growth is limited by administrative capacity to govern the program.

### Undergraduate Research Journals

Working with Merinda Hensley at the University Library, OUR has assisted in the creation of such journals in several university units and programs. Although the exact organizational arrangements vary by unit, these journals are published electronically, once (or twice) a year, and student edited with faculty supervision. Software, training, and archiving are provided by the University Library. OUR pays for initial startup costs for the units involved as well as for training by the University Library staff.

The number of undergraduate research journals has doubled since last year: the English Department's *Re:Search*, *The Undergraduate Literary Criticism Journal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign* is now in its fourth year; *I-ACES: Journal of Undergraduate Research at ACES*, and the *TRiO McNair Scholars Undergraduate Research Journal* are both in their third year of publication; *Illini Journal of International Security* published its third issue Spring 2017, publishing biannually; the *Journal of Undergraduate Social Work Research* published its inaugural issue in Spring 2017. These journals can be accessed [here](#).

As of Spring 2017, the Ethnography of the University Initiative's (EUI) *Peer Review: The Undergraduate Research Journal of the Ethnography of the University Initiative* was placed on hiatus, as numbers of EUI courses fell for the academic year and, therefore, numbers of submissions.

### Undergraduate Research Certificates

OUR created its undergraduate research certificate program in Fall 2013. This certificate was established to create a framework by which the university recognizes student achievement in undergraduate research. This certificate provides students with an added credential that they can present to employers and graduate schools. Requirements include two research presentations, relevant coursework and/or research experiences, and attendance at professional workshops or research presentations.

OUR awards undergraduate certificates on an academic year cycle. While the amount of certificates awarded this year has dropped from last year, the amount of submissions has increased as we have begun accepting applications earlier in their academic career. OUR's work with colleges and departments in integrating research curricula with our certificate program continues to increase the numbers of students applying for certificates. We anticipate that such integration will continue to produce more applications and certificate completion. A new database has streamlined the application process, with students able to apply as early as their freshman year, with monitoring of student progress and more efficient reporting for OUR.

### Student Development

*Research Support Grants.* As noted in last year's annual report, OUR restructured its research grant program, effective Fall 2016. The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellows (SURF) and Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship-Abroad (SURF-A) were converted to our Research Support Grant, administered in two cycles – one in Fall and one in Spring. The restructuring was meant to address both the ongoing budget crisis, as well as larger questions of

accessibility to and diversity of research support. Students may apply for grants up to \$2,000 per student (or team), to be used within the academic year (or summer following) in which the grant is given. Application requires a proposal of research and support by a faculty mentor or institutional affiliation, with reporting at the end of the research term. Additionally, we require a budget outlining expected expenses, including materials and other costs that were not previously supported under the SURF and SURF-A grants. Of 79 applications, 19 grants were awarded totaling \$20,155.86, with a significant rise in applications from students in the humanities and fine and applied arts.

*Conference Travel Grants.* This program is designed to facilitate the presentation of undergraduate research at professional conferences beyond the UI campus. These are competitive awards in which students submit their proposals and acceptances for national and international conferences, and OUR reimburses the winners for travel expenses up to a designated amount. In the 2016/17 academic year, OUR restructured this program down from three competition cycles to two. For the Fall competition, students could apply for conference travel taking place anytime from the beginning of the previous summer to the beginning of the following spring term. Students applying to the Spring cycle could use grants for travel anytime from the beginning of the previous Fall term to the end of the following summer. A “zone” award system, dependent upon distance, was also put into place, with a cap set at \$350. Students submitting proposals and receiving awards came from a wide range of departments and colleges. Of 49 grant applications received, a total of 36 were awarded, totaling \$5,250.

*Capitol Scholars.* In cooperation with sister UI campuses at Chicago and Springfield, OUR participated in the fourth University of Illinois Undergraduate Research Day (aka “Posters Under the Dome”) event at the Illinois State Capitol on April 25, 2017. Ten students from the Urbana campus were chosen as Capitol Scholars based on the quality of their research and relevance to state policy concerns. Students presented their posters in the main hallways of the Capitol to members of the state legislature, their staffs, and visitors. Students also received a tour of the Capitol. A significant increase in outreach to legislators and news media by all three campuses resulted in a record number of visits from legislators. Several students (including Urbana students) were interviewed about their projects and undergraduate research generally by local news channels.

### Faculty Development

*Faculty Development Grants:* Due to ongoing budget concerns, the faculty development grant program continued to be suspended for the 2016/17 academic year. However, with programming funds made available from the Provost Office over the next three academic years, we anticipate significant future emphasis on faculty and program development in support of undergraduate research experiences.

### Drop-In Hours

Inaugurated in 2015/16, drop-in hours continue to be a demonstrated need. With the inauguration of our undergraduate research ambassador program (peer mentors) in 2017/18, we anticipate increasing drop-in hours from the current one afternoon per week.

### Getting Started in Research Workshop Series

Inaugurated in Spring 2016, our Getting Started in Research Workshop (GSIRW) series have proven extremely successful, and student interest continues to surpass workshop offerings.

In 2016/17, OUR hosted eight GSIRWs, serving a total of 400 students. In this workshop, OUR provides an overview of the various forms of undergraduate research taking place on our campus, provides guidance in developing a plan of action, and discusses ways to contact faculty research mentors. At the conclusion of each workshop, students were asked to provide feedback through the use of an online survey. Through these responses, OUR believes that this workshop in its current format is very effective in helping students of all class standings navigate the structure of undergraduate research on campus. Given the demonstrated need, OUR will implement an average of four GSIRWs at the beginning of each semester. In upcoming years, we will aim to expand student-oriented workshops through collaborations with campus stakeholders.

### Prairie Futures and Design Commons

“Recovering Prairie Futures: Midwestern Innovation and Inter-disciplinary Digital Developments” (Prairie Futures) is an IPRH research cluster. Prairie Futures looks to drive research through pedagogy across a number of units, ultimately providing a “toolkit” of digital means supporting inquiries around Illinois developments and innovations. Faculty would be able to adopt a comprehensive module or a single activity in their courses; these courses would then contribute to an ongoing archive. The Prairie Futures group includes faculty and academic professionals from across campus, including GSLIS, Media & Cinema Studies, the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning, the University Library, OUR/EUI, NCSA, and FAA. In its second year, we continue to think through UI’s interdisciplinary innovation histories and pedagogy, providing an overview of tools and resources (including specific scholarly or popular resources and projects) that have worked well to translate or motivate innovation histories for students, faculty, and the broader public.

Growing from its interest in and engagement with the proposed Design Center at UI, this past year saw the continuance of its Design Dialogues Speakers Series, which brings together a multi-disciplinary audience of faculty, staff, students, and researchers from across the UI campus and community stakeholders.

## **2016/17 NEW PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### Development Efforts and Outreach

*Corporate Partnerships and Private Sector Engagement.* Collaborations with the UI Office of Corporate Relations (OCR) continued. OUR staff met with Research Park administrators to facilitate more engagement with Park companies; special invitations were sent to 20 of these companies, offering a special discount for participation in URS. Although support from Research Park companies proved initially unsuccessful, follow-up contacts made with Huawei, for instance, signal interest in partnering on internships, etc. External outreach continues to be a challenge; moreover, efforts in this area were reduced due to Interim Director’s internally (campus) identified focus (see “Strategic Planning and Future Directions” below).

Financial support for student prizes at URS were provided by Monsanto, TechnipFMC, and the Stevick Foundation.

*UI Research Institutes.* The process of extending interactions between OUR and UI campus research institutes continues. Areas of collaboration include: 1) establishing best practices for undergraduate research in the units and in collaboration with OUR; 2) identifying and promoting diversity measures to increase undergraduate research at the institutes among underrepresented groups; and 3) partnering with research institutes on external grants

(government, foundation, private) in support of integrating undergraduate research in research proposals. With regard to best practices, OUR worked with the Office of University Counsel, Risk Management, and Office of Sponsored Research to develop best practices with regard to volunteer internships/externships (see Best Practices below). An internship template was created and practice put in place; in accordance with University policy and the Office's own mission, OUR encourages internships for course credit or wages only.

*Student Recruitment.* OUR continues to work with the Office of Admissions in recruiting students to UI. OUR staff attended and staffed a booth for Admitted Students Days in Spring 2017, speaking to prospective students and their parents as well as distributing OUR brochures on its current programs and initiatives.

*In the Field and #IMPARTOFIT.* In academic year 2015/16, OUR inaugurated its "In the Field" short video vignettes of undergraduate researchers, as part of its Student Research Spotlight. While successful, these vignettes are labor intensive and require a good deal of post-production. For the URW this year, we launched our #IMPARTOFIT campaign, where students were able to share (on Twitter through hashtags #URW2017 and #IMPARTOFIT), a 15 second video 'elevator speech' about their research, or a research selfie (where they do research), for a gift card. We look to expanding the IMPARTOFIT campaign outside of the URW only, possibly in combination with the "In the Field" series.

*International and Area Studies Library / International Reference Committee.* Because of OUR's all-campus role and mission in support of undergraduate research, Dr. Rodriguez'G was invited to serve on ad hoc committee in the International and Area Studies Library (IASL). Charged with developing recommendations for both short-term and long-term strategies to expand the partnership that IASL shares with students and scholars, the Committee in particular looked to develop further services and programming engaging undergraduate, including facilitating undergraduate research projects focusing on topics falling within global and area studies.

*Serving Underrepresented Groups.* OUR continues to work with the Office of Minority Student Affairs and its TRiO McNair programs to enhance their efforts. Specifically, the Office provides data on minority student participation in the URS and encourages McNair scholars to submit proposals; provides data on and encouragement to minority students receiving conference and research travel grants, as well as undergraduate research certificates.

*Community Engagement.* EUI has proved a successful model for community research engagement; our partnership with Centennial High School continues to flourish (see EXTANT PROGRAMS – Ethnography of the University Initiative above). Through our relationship with IPRH, this year EUI began working with The Odyssey Project, a program where eligible community members (Champaign-Urbana) take four free humanities courses taught by University of Illinois faculty. EUI worked with the University Library and Odyssey Project faculty to support and facilitate Odyssey students' presentation of their work at the EUI biannual student conference held as a URW event.

*Communication Efforts.* Following on last year's successful rebranding and social media presence, OUR hired its first undergraduate social media intern in Fall 2016. Her efforts were instrumental in further building the Office's social media presence. Twitter has proven to be the most successful social media platform for engagement with students, the campus, and the community. In 2016/17 OUR saw a staggering **461.8%** increase in total impressions (total times in which a post was seen). We have **close to doubled (432)** the number of followers from the same time last year. To date, OUR has not kept records and analytics for Facebook engagement,

but plan to do so beginning in 2017/18, as we expand upon previous Facebook marketing efforts; we recognize that this platform is likely a better way for OUR to engage with students as well as on and off-campus departments, programs, and units. We also look to establish a presence on other appropriate social media platforms, such as Instagram.

We also continue to encourage campus stakeholders' engagement with our office, meeting with units like The Center for Global Studies, The Career Center, LAS Honors, LAS Directors of Undergraduate Studies, Council of Undergraduate Deans, the College of Education, and I-Promise, as well as presentations given for individual labs and classes.

*Best Practice and Successful Models.* Based upon inquiries from Advisory Board members, various campus labs/research institutes, as well as future possible relationships with corporate partners, we looked to create a best practice model for both internal and external internships. Of particular concern was the question of unpaid internships, and whether or not our office (and the larger campus) supports 'volunteer' positions. Working over the last year with the Career Center, the Office of Sponsored Programs, University Counsel, Office of Risk Management, OBFS, and members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA), this has not been a straightforward process (even with myriad template examples). With every question answered, it seemed two arose, but we anticipate having an internship affiliation agreement (for both on and off campus) template in Fall 2017. Once finalized, we will introduce it to faculty and other academic personnel through workshops in AY 2017/18, as well as disseminate it through other portals.

*Campus Conversations on Undergraduate Research.* In Spring 2017, in partnership with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation, we held a series of focus groups to assess what type of central campus support or programming around undergraduate research would be most helpful to students, departments, and faculty. Emerging from these conversations, we identified several key areas for enhancement and support. Please see Strategic Planning and Future Directions, below.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Through our Campus Conversations on Undergraduate Research held this past academic year with faculty, academic staff, and students, and in follow-up conversations with the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education and Innovation Charles Tucker, III, the Interim Director (25% service-in-excess) has identified several key areas for enhancement and development, including: establishment of best practices across disciplines; increased support for faculty development (including recognition and reward); increased student development (beyond current programs); assessment/evaluation of undergraduate research opportunities and experiences; and questions of accessibility.

The Office will focus efforts in the next academic year on:

*Faculty Development:* Through workshops and development grants for designing new or redesigning existing courses to include a meaningful research experience, particularly: courses or programs that provide 'on-ramps' to undergraduate research and inquiry, such as introductory level courses with a research experience; courses that integrate another high-impact practice (i.e., community engagement/service learning); and courses that can work to provide the scaffolding for a research-based curriculum. The Office anticipates partnering with units like the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning to advance and support such development. Also, new

programming funding from the Provost Office over the next three years promises more robust support in initiating this kind of curricular and co-curricular development.

*Create Comprehensive Campus Profile of Undergraduate Research.* In Spring 2015, OUR conducted its first survey of all undergraduates at UI about their research experiences; approximately 5,000 undergraduate participated (15% response rate). For purposes of the survey, undergraduate research was defined as going “beyond ordinary class research in the library...” and involving more than “repeating what others have done, but making an original contribution to knowledge...” in the form of a capstone project or senior thesis, collecting their own data, working on a faculty member’s research project, making an original artistic contribution, or writing an extended research paper that requires original analysis. For a more detailed analysis of the survey results, please see OUR Annual Report 2014/15, pages 8-10. Based upon Campus Conversation results and OUR’s own experience, we plan to conduct a new survey on undergraduate research in Spring 2018 which will be more nuanced in understanding *what* undergraduate research and inquiry is, and *where/how* it is taking place. Survey questions will address or engage, for instance, the new campus Learning Outcomes in terms of discovery and inquiry, etc., as well as evaluating utility. We also anticipate that creating such a comprehensive campus profile will also foster more campus partnerships, financial or otherwise.

*Best Practice.* Continue work on best practice models for undergraduate research across disciplines; as noted above, this has begun with creation of internship best practice model. We also anticipate working with departments and units on definitions and practices of research experiences in their discipline(s). This will also help us create a campus ‘profile’ of undergraduate research.

*Centralized ‘Database’ of Research Opportunities.* In the past two years, we have consulted with both ScholarBridge and ResearchConnection, but these systems have proven cost-prohibitive and currently beyond the operating budget of the Office. We look to see how we can provide at least skeletal framework that uses existing links/structures, such as the new Illinois Research Profiles site, and department and unit liaisons. This will be under development during the 2017/18 academic year, with hope of roll-out by Fall 2018.

*Undergraduate Community/Network of Research Peers.* We look to build a peer mentor/ambassador program, beginning in academic year 2017/18. Students will be solicited from those students who have won awards or grants from our office. Such peers will also reduce some of the current ‘advising’ load through supporting drop-in hours, serving as representatives of OUR at campus events like Admitted Student Days and Quad Day, as well as lead current and future workshops.