

## **Communication Audit Report**

Office for Undergraduate Research

MEJO 232 APPLES Interns:

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Sept. 29, 2016

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office for Undergraduate Research (OUR) was established in 1999 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to provide students with an intellectually engaging environment through mentored research and creative activity. This communication audit analyzes the effectiveness of internal and external communication within OUR.

The research instruments used to conduct the audit include a short survey sent out to students at UNC-Chapel Hill, interviews with OUR staff members, observations of OUR outreach materials and an examination of the OUR website and social media analytics. The interviews provided a clear understanding of internal communication within OUR, while the survey and outreach materials helped create a better understanding of external communication strategies in OUR. The analytics drawn from statistical data shed light on the effectiveness of OUR digital communication tools which include a website in addition to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.

The analytics, survey and outreach materials revealed that the most critical area for improvement is targeting a specific audience and reaching it. The Google Analytics results indicated that a majority of users do not spend a significant amount of time on the OUR website, limiting the the amount of knowledge students and other visitors have about the office. The existing outreach materials, while beneficial, lack the visual appeal necessary to be appealing to students. Implementing infographics, engaging photographs and less text on these materials will increase the likelihood that students will take notice. Currently, the materials used for distribution are similar to fliers distributed by other departments on campus, making them easy to overlook.

While the main goal of OUR is to encourage students to participate in research opportunities, the survey administered revealed that a majority of students have not utilized OUR's resources and instead opt to reach out to professors for research opportunities. To increase awareness of OUR's services and improve OUR's relationships with faculty, it will be critical to create a more direct means of communication and establish a clear marketing goal. It is imperative that OUR establishes a more clear way to communicate with students without relying on professors to do so. It is common for undergraduates to use other resources when conducting research, such as a professor or the library, therefore, OUR needs to develop its social media presence and draw students to its office in Graham Memorial Hall more frequently. OUR is committed to helping students, but the main concern is getting in touch with them about research options.

OUR offers valuable and unique resources and services to the undergraduate student body, yet the organization is not the most popular location for students seeking information about research. By analyzing its effective strategies, apparent shortcomings, possible opportunities and outside threats, OUR can formulate a clear and efficient plan for improving its outreach and communication efforts. OUR excels at internal communication, information dissemination and social media presence. However, OUR can work to improve its website navigation and accessibility, social media engagement, logo recognition and external communication strategies. Many outside opportunities exist for OUR, including the credibility and clout of university-sponsored programs and the advantages of website and analytics technologies. However, the tendency for students to seek information about research from departments and faculty members proves to be an obstacle that OUR must address and overcome

in order for students to recognize the full extent of their services. By improving the design and functionality of its website, launching strategic social media campaigns, targeting specific demographics within the student body, and better cooperating with faculties and departments, OUR can more effectively communicate and offer its services to the undergraduate student body.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Office for Undergraduate Research exists to promote active, mentored learning experiences for undergraduates. It was created in 1999 after a report by the Chancellor's Task Force on Intellectual Climate exposed the need for an intellectually engaging community at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In its first 10 years of existence, 220 research-exposure courses were offered and an average of 50 percent of undergraduates participated in a research-intensive academic course. The department continues to grow and develop today.

Today, OUR offers a variety of research opportunities for undergraduates through research-exposure and research-intensive courses as well as summer fellowships known as Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships. OUR also hosts a database where students can find information on a wide range of research opportunities being offered by faculty members. In April, OUR hosts a Celebration of Undergraduate Research, which showcases undergraduate research of various disciplines across the university.

OUR aims to create more awareness of the department across campus. The staff's goal is never to have a student ask, "What is the Office for Undergraduate Research?" The department also hopes to raise awareness of arts and humanities research opportunities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Various research instruments were used to conduct the audit, which includes surveys, interviews, observations and analytics. While the interviews served as a way to gain insight into OUR internal communication strategies, the observations, surveys and analytics helped reveal the effectiveness of OUR external communication strategies.

### *Survey*

The survey was created to measure student awareness of OUR and its services. With five questions in total, the survey asked students if they participated in research, which department they researched for, how they found their research location and how familiar they were with OUR. The survey also inquired about the OUR logo in hopes of determining how familiar students were with the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Ratio that the OUR logo is based on. The purpose of the survey was to gain a deeper understanding of how students go about participating in research as well as if, how and where OUR falls into their plans.

### *Interviews*

APPLES team members interviewed Monica Richard, Yesenia Merino and Beth Fischer to learn more about the inner workings of OUR and to better understand the rationale behind their internal and external communication strategies. The interviews consisted of 10 principal questions, with follow-up questions added throughout the interview. The questions asked essential members of the OUR team to rate the team's internal and external communication effectiveness. They were also asked to share what they thought were OUR's communication strengths and which aspects of their communication strategies needed improvement. Interviewees were also encouraged to offer any suggestions for improvement. An analysis of

their responses is located in the Results section and the full interview transcripts can be found in the Appendix.

### *Observations*

Monica Richard provided the APPLES team with a sample of outreach documents to observe and analyze. These documents included displays, handouts, fliers, letterheads and infographics. The observations were completed by looking through each of these documents and taking note of design elements, color schemes, content and location. The observations of each document were then compared with one another to see which elements were consistent, which visual elements were most appealing and which documents contained too much text. The recommendations and analysis of OUR's materials are based off of these observations.

### *Analytics*

Auditors were granted access to OUR's Google Analytics page for its website, <http://our.unc.edu>. Google Analytics is a tool that provides detailed, statistical information about a website's traffic and users. The specific elements of OUR's analytics that were used for the audit include audience overview, website data, referral traffic and social media. More specifically, the audit looked at sessions, users, duration of sessions, access devices, source of traffic and social media platforms. The statistical data served as clear indications of how many people use OUR's website, how they access it and how long they use it for.

## **AUDIT DIARY**

The communication audit began on Thursday, Sept. 22, 2016, and went through Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2016. In order to gauge undergraduate students' familiarity with the Office

for Undergraduate Research, a survey was distributed to the student body on Thursday, Sept. 22. Thursday was also the first day of interviews conducted with OUR employees at Graham Memorial Hall. Monica Richard, Beth Fischer and Yesenia Merino discussed the internal and external communication efforts of OUR. Throughout the audit, APPLES group members examined the digital and print materials to facilitate OUR's ability to attract the attention of students.

The results from those who responded to the survey reveal that undergraduate students do not use OUR services frequently. Over 90 percent of the respondents are aware of OUR, but only 8.7 percent have utilized OUR's services. This is an indication that undergraduates prefer to do research on their own, or ask their respective professors for guidance. However, the main difficulty with this survey is that the sample size is too small to gain a real understanding for OUR's outreach among the student population. The window of time between when the audit started and finished certainly had an effect on establishing more credible evidence. The survey was shared across the various social media accounts of the APPLES group members, specifically targeting UNC-Chapel Hill students. Unfortunately, there was no access to a listserv for the entire student body. If there was more time to develop a strategy for a higher response rate, then the survey would have been more effective in its findings.

On Thursday, Sept. 22, Niki Wasserman interviewed Beth Fischer, the communications and technology manager for OUR. Fischer is a part-time member of OUR and her principal role is monitoring the website. Fischer's main concern is that the website does not help students identify how to use the programs offered. The website navigation lacks a clear structure, so

Fischer would like to see some improvement in that area. Fischer wants OUR to be an easy tool for students to use with regularity.

Annie Proctor administered the next interview with Monica Richard, who is the interim associate director of OUR. Richard discussed the expectation of students when they come into the office. There is difficulty finding the balance between helping students understand the importance of research and fulfilling their desire to reach a particular goal. Richard mentioned that it could be favorable to initiate relationships with professors who could, in turn, reference the benefits of using OUR. Richard believes that word-of-mouth could be another avenue for external communication to develop.

Wasserman orchestrated the last interview with Yesenia Merino, the outreach coordinator for OUR. Merino highlighted the need for a strong social media presence and the lack of consistency in that area. Merino believes that social media will allow OUR to build more relationships across campus with other departments. Social media could also allow OUR to get in touch with recent graduates. Merino is hopeful that graduates can open up about their experiences with OUR and how it is helpful as a college student and in the professional world.

Observations of digital and print content took place from Thursday, Sept. 22, until Wednesday, Sept. 28, by all APPLES group members. Monica Richard provided the group with these materials using Google Drive. Group members observed OUR's Google Analytics results on Tuesday, Sept. 27. The team set parameters on Google Analytics to measure results for one year, specifically from Sept. 26, 2015, until Sept. 26, 2016.

## RESULTS

### Google Analytics

The analytics pulled from the OUR website (<http://our.unc.edu>) date from September 2015 to September 2016. The results are distinguished by sessions, technology used to access the website, time and social media.

#### *Sessions*

The data revealed that the average session, a group of interactions that took place on the website during a specific time frame, was only 2 minutes, 4 seconds. While this is considered a significant amount of time for surfing on Twitter or Facebook, for a professional website this is not a sufficient amount of time to receive and retain information that the website provides.

Visitors roughly visited two pages per session, indicating that the average visitor did not spend a significant amount of time exploring the website. Based on interviews with OUR staff, this could be due to the website's difficult navigation. This implies that either visitors that come to the website have a very clear understanding of what they're looking for, which is consistent with the data showing that 47.4 percent of visitors have been on the site before. This indicates that users who visit the site once are more likely to return, however, the data does not indicate the frequency with which visitors returned or the duration of their session.

#### *Technology Used to Access Website*

The analytics also reveal that 82 percent of the sessions were made from desktops. Only 15 percent of sessions were conducted on mobile devices and 2 percent were conducted on tablets.

Of the desktop sessions, 78 percent of visits were made by new users. This implies that the desktop version of the website is the most impactful and reaches the most amount of people. This also indicates that the website is the most critical point of information. The percentage of sessions that occurred on desktops indicate that new users are most likely to visit the website from a computer which means visitors were intentionally seeking out the website (as opposed to stumbling upon it on a phone or tablet.) However, the average session duration on a desktop is only two minutes, which again, is indicative that there is very little information and visitors can retain.

### *Time*

The data reveals a distinct peak in sessions across the 12-month period, which indicates that outreach and marketing tools are not as impactful at specific points and times. In the future, planning content around specific events or seasons throughout the semester could be very beneficial in student recruitment.

### *Social Media*

Facebook, Twitter and Blogger are the most popular social media networks that viewers visit. For such a large network, 261 total sessions is not ideal. However, there is an opportunity for OUR to utilize Facebook to ensure that a greater amount of the target audience will receive relevant information.

### *Survey*

A majority of students hear about OUR through individual research online. Only 24 percent of students learn about the office from professors. It is important to note that while most students do not hear about OUR from the professors, 46.9 percent of respondents turn to professors first for research opportunities. Additionally, 63 percent of respondents know what OUR is but choose not to use it, and 8 percent of respondents are not familiar with OUR's services.

### *Interviews with OUR Staff*

Overall, the interviews revealed that internal communication is strong and efficient for each of the staff members and that external communication is not as targeted and impactful as they would like. Email is the best form of communication and the office is still trying to figure out what the best ways are to contact students directly.

#### *Beth Fischer, communications and technology manager*

The interview with Beth Fischer revealed that internally, the OUR staff members believe that communication is incredibly effective. However, frequent staffing changes due to part-time positions have negatively impacted communication. Fischer stated that there are feasibility problems because OUR does not always have the same people in the office. Over time this can result in varying language as well as inconsistent goals and projects. Each of these factors has the potential to negatively impact external communication.

Speaking with Fischer also revealed that having such a large amount of “point people” outside of the office has led to confusion and difficulty communicating. This is typically caused by several different people contacting one person about different ideas at different times. OUR staff members believe that there should be a clearer strategic plan for reaching audiences, including what times audiences are reached and monitoring messages to avoid repetitiveness. Fischer recognizes that although utilizing the same tools of outreach each year can have benefits, students change and OUR’s outreach methods should be altered accordingly. Some of these issues may arise because internally, certain staff members are unaware of what others are working on, which can result in inconsistent expectations in regards to assigning additional responsibilities.

Fischer believes that OUR is not being strategic enough and not prioritizing specific audiences. She finds that a large amount of navigation is devoted to people who aren’t students, even though OUR’s programming is developed for students. She believes eliminating the “middleman” from the process of reaching students directly will have the greatest impact for the student body.

*Monica Richard, interim associate director*

Our interview with Richard revealed that due to the the small number of staff members in the office, weekly meetings and communication via email is most effective. When special events or programs are being planned, additional meetings are held. A prominent issue Richard discussed is that dealing with students is particularly difficult because they vary from year to year. OUR struggles with adjusting to new student bodies while still being efficient with their

efforts. Working with various departments on campus is also difficult because each department has a different strategy for communicating with students and for introducing them to other opportunities on campus.

Richard said she would like to see students have a clearer understanding of what services OUR offers, what the definition of research is and what research opportunities exist at UNC. Richard believes this is difficult because contacting students relates directly to external communication and OUR does not specialize in marketing or branding. Richard, like Fischer, found that the difficulty in reaching students is caused by the “middleman,” whether that be a professor or other faculty member. This makes it difficult to connect with students about research opportunities, which is the main goal of OUR. Richard also believes that using social media may not reach students the way it is intended. Just because students use Twitter doesn't mean that students will see the tweets sent out or that they will take heed to the information that is in the tweets that are sent out.

*Yesenia Merino, outreach coordinator*

Our interview with Merino led to very similar results, as she echoed concerns and sentiments similar to that of Fischer and Richard. However, she believes that internal communication could be more timely. Having the responsibility of posting items on social media is difficult when there is a plethora of information to be shared in a specific time frame. Additionally, she believes that external communication should be targeted to multiple audiences, not just one.

## **OUR Outreach Materials**

The outreach documents include fliers about SURF information sessions, SURF program application deadlines, faculty handouts and timelines. A majority of the documents are text-heavy and organize information with bullet points as opposed to relying on infographics, graphs or other visual elements. Most documents follow the same style of formatting, which makes it difficult to distinguish documents from one another at first glance. While consistency is important for branding, the monotony of the materials likely makes it difficult for students to distinguish information from one another. The materials are also very similar to those distributed by other departments and organizations, which may also contribute to the lack of responsiveness shown from students.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The analysis of the Office for Undergraduate Research's outreach materials revealed which elements of internal and external communication are successful, and which areas need improvement. Overall, OUR's team's efforts include multiple channels of communication to disseminate information within and outside the organization, but the execution of these efforts sometimes falter. While OUR excels in creating and distributing relevant information, the organization can improve its visibility and recognition. With students more inclined to turn to a department or professor for research inquiries, OUR staff must find a way to effectively reach the student body and establish itself as the primary point of contact for students who wish to engage in undergraduate research.

The process of analyzing OUR communication efforts included administering a survey to the student body, interviewing three key figures of the organization, observing print materials and displays, and interpreting website and social media analytics. Each of these research methods helped pinpoint which strategies effectively led students to reach out to OUR, and which strategies produced minimal results. The survey results revealed that almost half of respondents turned to a professor for research, while only 26.5 percent of respondents said that they visited OUR. While over 90 percent of respondents were aware of the existence of OUR, mostly through online research, only 10.2 percent of respondents have used OUR's services. These survey results illustrate that students are aware of OUR and its services, yet most of them are more likely to go down different avenues when interested in research. The survey indicates that OUR must retool its efforts if it wants students to utilize its resources more often when interested in research. The survey also questioned respondents about their familiarity with OUR's logo, which is a representation of the Fibonacci sequence. The logo is supposed to represent the Fibonacci sequence and capture the themes of balance and diversity, which are two aspects that embody the services that OUR offers. However, very few students recognized the inspiration behind the logo and subsequently missed the connection between the logo and OUR's services, indicating that the logo may not be extremely effective.

The interviews with Monica Richard, Beth Fischer and Yesenia Merino also provided valuable insights about the organization's internal and external communication efforts. Fischer emphasized the need for testing and the importance of efficient dissemination of information. While Merino praised the team's collaborative efforts, she noted that external communication, specifically social media, could be more digitally appealing, and that internal communication

could be more timely. In her interview, Richard stressed the importance of open communication, while also suggesting that the program increasingly engages with students and adapts to their needs. Each of these figures provided positive feedback about internal communication, but hoped for a more streamlined, organized, efficient and engaging strategy for external communication.

The outreach documents included handouts, fliers, displays and surveys. Each of these documents were visually appealing and contained consistent design elements. However, the handouts appeared to be include too much text, which can prevent the information from being easily and quickly comprehended. The print materials can all benefit from the addition of more images or infographics to create a balance between textual and visual elements. The color scheme of the outreach materials is simple and appropriate, combining Carolina blue with other neutral colors. The fliers advertising specific events are both creative and visually appealing, standing out as a strong suit among the other documents.

OUR's website and social media presence are promising aspects of the program's communication efforts. The website contains a plethora of relevant information about resources, programs and events, yet the navigation and accessibility of the website calls for improvement. From Sept. 26, 2015, until Sept. 26, 2016, 30,777 users visited the website for sessions averaging over two minutes. With no clear spikes in website traffic throughout the year and minimal amount of time spent on the website per session, OUR can improve by attracting users to its websites more frequently, more consistently and for longer periods of time. In regards to social media, OUR's Facebook and Twitter presence is satisfactory, with Facebook being the more frequently visited platform among users. OUR's Instagram, with only 14 followers, is in its early

stages and needs to gain more followers and content in order to have an impact on communication efforts.

*Strengths.* OUR specifically succeeds in providing quality information through a variety of communication efforts. Its events and workshops are well-advertised. The handouts and fliers seem to be effective means of reaching students. These successful elements of OUR's communication methods can be specifically applied to the organization's efforts to reach students who have general research inquiries. The organization updates its social media pages frequently, which increases the chance of engagement and effective communication. The Facebook and Twitter pages, with 702 likes and 1,316 followers, respectively, appear to be a successful means of reaching students digitally, and this method of communication should be further explored in the future. The website is also effective in the sense that all of the information that a student would need to know about OUR and its services is available. Internal communication is also a strength of OUR, as each of the key figures interviewed attested to efficient, frequent and transparent internal communication.

*Weaknesses.* While OUR shows no lack of effort, the execution of its communication strategies serves as its main weakness. Student outreach proves to be a shortcoming for OUR, as many students choose to bypass OUR when inquiring about research opportunities. Student outreach efforts, which include distributing fliers, encouraging students to visit the website, and holding workshops, appear to have good intentions, but are not executed to a full enough extent. Also, OUR focuses on advertising traditional research opportunities, but does not always use language and tactics to reach students outside of science departments. Another weakness is the visibility of OUR's social media accounts. While the Facebook and Twitter accounts are

established, the organization's posts receive little student engagement. Increasing the visibility of social media accounts can in turn increase awareness about OUR. Other shortcomings include the navigation and usability of the website. Most of the relevant information is packed under the student tab. While all of the information present is beneficial, the lack of organization can negatively impact a student's attempt to discover, understand and retain the information. The website also has issues loading on desktop and mobile devices, which can further deter students from using it to find information about research opportunities. OUR's logo is also an element that can be improved. While the intentions of the logo are clever and creative, the inspiration behind the logo is not universally recognized. The majority of students cannot make the connection between the Fibonacci-inspired logo and OUR's goals and services.

*Opportunities.* OUR's most important goal is to more effectively reach out to all kinds of students who are interested in conducting research. By improving its communication and student outreach efforts, OUR can work toward achieving that goal. One specific opportunity would be for OUR to use the university's social media clout to build its own following. Taking advantage of its role as an essential part of UNC's undergraduate program can help the organization gain visibility and social media followers. The large undergraduate student body and its diverse interests also serve as opportunities for OUR. The UNC-Chapel Hill student body is typically one that is ambitious and innovative, and this can prove to be beneficial for OUR. Even if some students are inclined to contact other sources for research information, there are still students from a variety of departments that are interested in research, but aren't as informed about their options, that OUR can reach out to. Finally, OUR can utilize more advanced programs to enhance website design, navigation and functionality. Technologies that would allow the website

to be optimized for mobile devices, and services such as Google Analytics, can eliminate some of the usability problems that the website faces.

*Threats.* The main obstacle that OUR faces is the presence of alternate services for undergraduate research. The majority of students go through their professors or major departments to sign up for research. This tendency of the students serves as a major threat to OUR's success, since students are opting to skip the step of visiting the office for general inquiries. While OUR doesn't necessarily need to be a primary point of contact, students tend to miss out on recognizing the extent of research opportunities when they choose to bypass OUR's services. To overcome this obstacle, OUR must emphasize the importance of its services, target a specific group of students, and partner with departments and faculty instead of competing with them.

*Recommendations.* In order to improve outreach and communication efforts, OUR should improve the navigation and usability of its website as soon as possible. Specifically, OUR can organize the information across multiple tabs, instead of packing it all into one tab. A website redesign can help boost OUR's efforts by making its information more visually appealing and easily accessible to the student body. Students typically search on a website when trying to learn more about a program, so easy navigation combined with sufficient information will help students efficiently discover and use OUR's services. OUR should also launch a social media campaign as soon as possible. OUR's mascot, Piglet, is a creative character with a detailed, fictional background that can serve as a unique and memorable representative for the program. Launching a campaign across each of its social platforms can help OUR gain more followers while disseminating essential information about its services, resources and opportunities. OUR

can also plan to target the specific part of the student body. This may be freshman who are unsure about which subject they want to major in, or upperclassman who are majoring within departments that aren't typically associated with research. These departments can include social sciences, humanities and fine arts. In each of these cases, these students would be less likely to go through a department, and more likely go through OUR for its services. Finally, OUR should consider changing or altering its logo when time and resources permit. Making the logo more recognizable, and pairing it with a catchy and relevant slogan, will help students form a better connection with and understanding of OUR's services.

## S.W.O.T. Analysis Chart

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Events/workshops	Logo	Make OUR a place where students go when they want to do research	Students going to professors and departments to do research
Social media presence	Navigation on website		
Lots of info on the website	Social media visibility	Gain a larger social media finding	
Good communication between employees due to email and team meetings	Student outreach efforts	Create a better layout and mobile-optimized, website that is easy to navigate	
Effective bulletin boards/fliers		Increase visibility amongst student body	

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## *HISTORY OF OUR*

<http://our.unc.edu/about/detailed-history/>

Text:

A primary purpose of our public university is to generate, evaluate and communicate ideas within a diverse intellectual community comprised of faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Therefore, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is dedicated to the task of making research, mentored scholarship, and creative performance distinctive features undergraduate education. The provision of “high quality undergraduate instruction to students within a community engaged in original inquiry and creative expression” has been an explicit part of the University’s mission statement since 1994.

The UNC-Chapel Hill intellectual community is defined by the fact that faculty members are involved in a wide range of undergraduate programs, are committed to training Master’s and PhD students, and also are engaged in their own research and scholarly activity. Ideally, universities such as ours are “communities of learners” where “the shared goals of investigation and discovery should bind together the disparate elements to create a sense of wholeness” (*Boyer Commission Report on Educating Undergraduates*, p. 9). In reality, the emphasis on research sometimes separates faculty from undergraduates and graduate education from undergraduate education, to the detriment of all. In 1997, the Chancellor’s Task Force on Intellectual Climate released a report that described several ways in which UNC-Chapel Hill was failing to engage its students in a satisfying and powerful intellectual life sufficient to address the pressing needs of society (a crucial role for a public university). The report also outlined several interrelated strategies for effecting change including the creation of OUR, in 1999, to promote active, mentored learning experiences for undergraduates.

In the first 10 years after OUR was established (1999-2009), an average of 50% of undergraduates at UNC-Chapel Hill completed a research-intensive course prior to graduating; 220 research-exposure courses were offered; 6976 undergraduates participated in these courses; and 330 students received a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. With support from administrators, faculty, and generous contributors, undergraduate research opportunities are continuing to grow.

The past several years have seen considerable national attention directed to undergraduate education in research universities and to the important role of undergraduate research in education. As discussed at a 2002 national meeting on undergraduate research, universities like UNC-Chapel Hill are working on creating a “culture of undergraduate research” where learning through inquiry and research can flourish. Administrators, faculty, and students each play important roles in defining and articulating the shared values and benefits of widespread student participation in the university’s research mission. Although changing academic culture can be a challenging, UNC-Chapel Hill has embraced this challenge and signs of progress are everywhere. Undergraduate research is part of the current Academic Plan and an important

component of the new General Education curriculum. Undergraduate research is also a point of emphasis in the University's Quality Enhancement Plan, "Making Critical Connections".

*INTERVIEW WITH BETH FISCHER*

Niki Wasserman: On a scale of 1-10, how well do you feel your department communicates internally and why?

Beth Fischer: I think somewhere between a 6 and a 7. Mostly due to a lot of staffing changes, since we don't always have the same people in the office and almost all of us are part-time. So there is some feasibility problems there.

NW: What is your most frequent form of communication?

BF: Email.

NW: Do you find that effective?

BF: Yes

NW: Why?

BF: I like having a record of things and it allows us, since we are working at separate times, to very quickly get in touch.

NW: Okay. Do you think that everyone else feels the same way about email? Is that the favored form of communication?

BF: I think we all feel pretty good about it as long as we also still have weekly staff meetings when everyone comes in. I think as long as we get enough face time, email works really well.

NW: Do you think the staff meetings are also essential to good communication?

BF: Yes.

NW: Okay. What types of issues in communication have you come across so far?

BF: We have a lot of different points with the outside world, and it is not always clear internally who is communicating at what points to outsiders. I think that is the biggest thing. So we might have several different people all contacting the same group of people.

NW: Do you have any ideas about what to do to fix that?

BF: Not at this point. I think that if I thought about it more I might have more suggestions. I'll be happy to hear suggestions on that.

NW: What do you think are your greatest strengths concerning internal communication?

BF: I try not to communicate when it is not necessary. Minimal reply-all and minimal acknowledgement just to say thanks. I try not to inundate people with information.

NW: So a similar question to before - on a scale of 1-10 how do you feel about how the department communicates externally.

BF: In terms of effort, I think it quite high. Probably an 8 or 9. In terms of effectiveness, I would say a 4 or 5.

NW: What changes would you like to see to make that more effective?

BF: A clearer strategic plan for when and how we touch our audiences. I would also like to see...I feel like we are repeating efforts and we don't know which ones are effective or not. We are trying to get to people and we are never sure if they ever get the message.

NW: Off the top of your head, do you have examples?

BF: We were just in a meeting talking about that we quite a bit of programming that we will make various announcements about via email or through orientation sessions, and we still talk to people and they say "I had no idea you did that." So that was a big one. At a faculty level, we try to make sure that we know that they let us know when they do research courses so we can advertise them. It doesn't click somehow that that's a benefit to them as well.

NW: Is there anything else you want to say about how you think internal communication can improve?

BF: I think some way of knowing what the big things are on each person's plate on a given time. Since we are so asynchronous we don't always have time to get to everything in meetings. I don't know about the methods for doing that.

NW: Is there anything else about improving external communication?

BF: I think the big thing is we have so little staff time and we are communicating with a very large work, so avoiding duplication and testing which methods actually are working are the two things I really want us to change.

NW: What do you think is the least effective way you communicate both internally and externally?

BF: I don't think it is a least effective way, sometimes we pick the wrong method for the wrong kind of information. I don't know how to avoid that, since it seems like a small thing in email it may actually need discussion. So some way of deciding when an email conversation needs to become an in-person conversation is a big issue for me. Externally, being able to do more effectiveness stuff with fewer people.

NW: You said you use email very frequently. Is there any other tool you use frequently that you think is effective?

BF: Our meetings, sometimes we leave notes for each other. It's almost all email. I'm usually only in the office one day a week.

NW: I have a few questions about the website. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the website right now?

BF: Everything is there. We actually were looking at other schools and undergraduate research programs and I was amazed at the basic stuff that was not on their websites. I know it is on ours. Since I started, we've done a lot to have consistency with formatting and making it mobile optimized to a degree. We are making some big changes in layout.

NW: What about weaknesses?

BF: The biggest weakness I think we haven't addressed is that I feel like it's not prioritizing the right audiences. We have a huge amount of navigation devoted to people who aren't students, and most of our program is directed at students. It doesn't feel like the paths are clear enough for students. I would really like to change that, especially at the navigation level. I am also working with inherited navigation, but I haven't been able to step back and assess that.

NW: How do you suggest improving the website?

BF: We are working on some better ways to integrate databases and search functions into the website. We have most of our databases on an old server, since you have to go to a different URL and redirect. And, they are not updatable, so I have to make all the updates manually. You can enter things and update them. That has been a real problem.

NW: What types of issues do you come across while working on the website, either by updating it or with trying to spread awareness about it to the students?

BF: I think that navigation is a huge issue for us. Switching to our.unc.edu helped a lot. We used to be /departments/our so that has helped a lot. All those databases and functionalities. We are on a Wordpress platform and it's the UNC build, so there are sometimes things that we want to be able to do that we just can't do, since plug-ins haven't been improved. That hasn't been a problem super frequently, but it makes it hard to do these fixes.

NW: On a scale of 1-10, how effective do you find the website as a communication tool and how can it be used more effectively?

BF: I would say it is around a 7. Because it is possible that everything is there, but sometimes we have to send things indirectly instead of saying you can find it on the website. Navigation is where the most opportunities are lost. I think there are too many long pages, so that is related to how we are structuring. The information itself is good but the way it is structured needs a lot of work.

NW: Can you tell me a little bit about how long you've been working here and what you do?

BF: I have been here for 2 and a half years. I'm a graduate student so I work part-time. I manage the website and manage all of our associated databases and other sort of things that plug into the website. I am currently overseeing a lot of our GRC program, which is course based and our IDST courses. So research in classroom aspects and outreach to faculty.

NW: What program are you in for graduate school?

BF: Art history.

#### *INTERVIEW WITH MONICA RICHARD*

Annie Proctor: On a scale of 1-10, how well do you feel your department communicates internally and why?

Monica Richard: With each other? I would say nine. I would say that because for me if I don't understand I'm going to ask and people that I work with understand that I encourage them to ask if they don't understand.

AP: So it's a very encouraging environment; it's open.

MR: Right, right. I would say it's open. That doesn't mean that things don't happen; that people will think that I'm understanding and someone look at me and say, "No that's not quite it." I mean it doesn't mean that that doesn't happen, but we are very open with our communications.

AP: What is your most frequent form of communication? Is it effective?

MR: Because we are a tiny office and there are a lot of temporary people, most of our communication is done through email and we have weekly staff meetings.

AP: They're on Tuesday's right?

MR: Yes, they're on Tuesdays. So if we are doing something that involves an event that requires an additional meeting, meetings may be scheduled.

AP: What is discussed at the staff meeting?

MR: Everything. Particularly our programs and events we have coming up. If people are having difficulty reaching their audiences. We discuss our contact with students. That helps us identify particular areas where we're not clear. Like for instance, we had that up on the website, but they keep asking us this question. Let's look them up. Just the office in general and higher administration and how that may affect our office.

AP: What issues in communication have you come across?

MR: Inside our office or to our publics?

AP: Internally and externally.

MR: I think we pretty much talked through the internal stuff, so I don't see any challenges there. Externally, I think because we are dealing with students, students can be different from year to year. With that happening, we have to adjust to that. And I'll give you an example: We can tell students that undergrad research have benefits to it, but students will come here and ask what the benefits are of doing undergraduate research. Those are two different questions because the first way we had been telling students that the benefits of research are more like teaching, learning, soft skills like building confidence and working on a team. But what I'm seeing as far as new students come in, it's more of tell me in regard to how it helps me reach my goal. It's different, it's a very different way to approach it.

AP: What are your greatest strengths concerning internal communication?

MR: Personally, again I encourage people to be open and I do likewise. If something doesn't feel right, I'll say it.

AP: On a scale of 1-10 how do you feel your department communicates externally?

MR: I would say we're probably at a five or six and I say that only because what we're also beginning to realize is that people who organize the university in a natural sciences and in the arts and humanities or social sciences. There are people who within those groups that separate themselves. If we're just thinking in terms of the arts, they may say, "well this is how we do it." Which is different than maybe how the humanities do things. So that's why I rate us low because we see these things, but we're beginning to tease apart how to approach, how to best approach these people in these different areas.

AP: What changes you would like to see?

MR: I would like to have a student not say, "I've never heard of that program before!" I would love for us to figure out the best way to engage students where they are. I always like to say we have three audiences. One is the student that comes in and has heard about research, but they don't know what it is. The second is one that has heard about what research is and is ready to get

started. The third student is one that has done it and wants to do it again; It's a matter of getting to a place where we can get students to where they are in terms of how they are in engagement.

AP: How do you think your internal communication could improve?

MR: It's pretty good, I would say. I feel pretty comfortable with where it is. We share our experiences. Each of us are from different disciplines so when we report back we say, "this is what I'm experiencing or this is what's happening in my department." or I've hear that people receive OUR emails and they hit delete because they think its for the sciences and not for the arts. And that's what I'm saying. We're having those conversations so I feel that we're in a good place. So I guess just more of it I suppose.

AP: How do you think you external communication could improve?

MR: This question is sort of funny in my mind because the how is marketing/branding. That isn't a skill that we have. We're trying to figure out what is our message what are our messages. So that's the challenge, I think. So, you know we could survey more, but for me it's something that we don't have right now and it's starting that process.

AP: What is the least effective way you all communication internally and externally?

MR: I think email works for us just because we check our email frequently. I think we're communicating just fine.

The least effective way externally is probably relying on others to get the messages to students, but that's a funny sort of nuanced thing. For instance, I know that students , in terms of reaching out to them, one of the most powerful ways of working with them. So if I can get a professor that encourages a student that they have a connection with to do research, it increases the likelihood that they'll do that. So it's almost like we've got this middle man to the student. I think in a way that's powerful. I think getting a student that's done it in the past and had a good exp that shares it with another student, I think that's powerful. And to actually have an email that someone can respond to is also a good thing. So , the least effective ways become those areas that we don't know how they're working. For example the active-TV\* in the union or the display in the Undergraduate Library. So when I'm talking to the director of undergraduate studies to the person that may be doing social media that's in charge of the ListServ\* of the students. It's trying to navigate through that to get to our audience.

AP: Would you say that measurement is a major thing? As in figuring out how to measure...

MR: I think that measurement is important, but I also think the right tool is. So I think it goes hand in hand. I want it to be visually appealing, like when you walk by, you know that message is for you. I also want to know how that's working for you.

AP: Which tools do you use to communicate? Which tools do you use the most frequently?

MR: Email and we have an e-newsletter and we're on Twitter and we have blogs and we have a Facebook page. So I'm not sure how well either of those are doing. I know for me I would like to see more content up frequently for the blogs. I'd love to see us inviting more guests on campus. I recognize that social media is for the whole world and that it's not just UNC Students. I mean we can forget that. It's like, "we're reaching the world, not every UNC student."

AP: But also the UNC students are your primary public.

MR: Right, and so they're in those spaces, but what I'm saying with that is sometimes there's this, that more power is given to social media than it has. In a respect of, yes, students are out there, but again you have to go back to how you target them and they may be in those spaces. But just because you send out a tweet does not mean that a UNC student got it. I think people forget that because it's like, "oh students are on twitter, I'm going to send out a tweet," Well that doesn't mean it reached them. So that's what I mean by that.

And also what I've learned is that as students go more into the areas that are important to them, you know they may come to our Facebook page for information, but wherever they are, it's up to that student to decide if "I'm going to share this in those spaces, with my friends."

#### *INTERVIEW WITH YESENIA MERINO*

Niki Wasserman: On a scale of 1-10, how well do you feel your department communicates internally and why?

Yesenia Merino: I would say we are about an 8. We collaborate pretty well, we meet regularly. We talk about what it is that we have going on. We are understaffed and overloaded, so sometimes we have to circle back and restate things.

NW: What is your most frequent form of communication?

YM: Email. It's easier than anything else due to how different our schedules are.

NW: What types of issues in communication have you come across so far?

YM: I think the only time I would ever say we have an issue is when things are time-sensitive.. We try to plan ahead, but that might require multiple emails or trying to get someone on the phone.

NW: What do you think are your greatest strengths concerning internal communication?

YM: I try to be pretty transparent. Doing the outreach, it's easy for outreach teams to go out and do their own things. I try to regularly loop back with the team, what it is that I'm doing, what it is that the student ambassadors are doing. Being transparent and looping everyone back in would be one of my strengths.

NW: On a scale of 1-10 how do you feel about how the department communicates externally.

YM: I would say we do about 7. We try to get out the same messaging through multiple different mechanisms. We will use a newsletter, social media and try to reach students directly or through their departments or broader school venues. That being said, some of the info we provide is dense and hard to digest. We are trying to get to a place where we are providing in a digitally appealing way that makes sense for people that aren't doing in the traditional stem field. It's more digitally appealing because it is easier to digest.

NW: What changes would you like to see to make that more effective?

YM: I would like for there to be multiple people managing social media and outreach. Social media requires a lot of time to keep up presence, build relationships and maintain relationships. I am only part-time. We need more.

NW: Is there anything else you want to say about how you think internal communication can improve?

YM: I think that I could be better about being more timely. More consistently posting stuff for social media, but also looping in the rest of the team as I am looking to expand our outreach. I am finding that I've already started a relationship development endeavor when I bring it up to the team. No one has said I wish I had told you sooner. It may just be my own perspective, but I like to be as strategic and intentional as possible. I want to build more relationships, I wish we could do more thinking before.

NW: Is there anything else about improving external communication?

YM: Making it more appealing to multiple audiences.

NW: What do you think is the least effective way you communicate both internally and externally?

YM: We don't use it very often, but phone is not super effective. When we do use it, it is because it is too hard to explain in an email. In particular, if an external person would reach us by randomly calling us, that wouldn't work because we are never by our phones.

NW: Is there any other tool you use frequently that you think is effective?

YM: During actual events, we text instead of email or call.

NW: What do you think are the greatest strengths of the social media accounts right now?

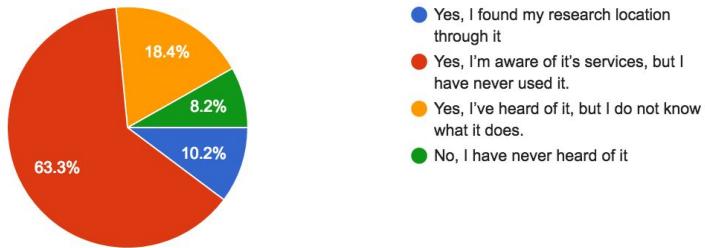
YM: I think that in particular, in the past year, we did a good job of better leveraging twitter. Not just with students, but also with other offices and departments. What's nice about UNC is that once you get LinkedIn with other places, they will start retweeting you and it explains your signal. Makes it easier for me to do my job. Same thing, just a different feel for Facebook. I think we do a slightly better job of Twitter.

NW: What about weaknesses?

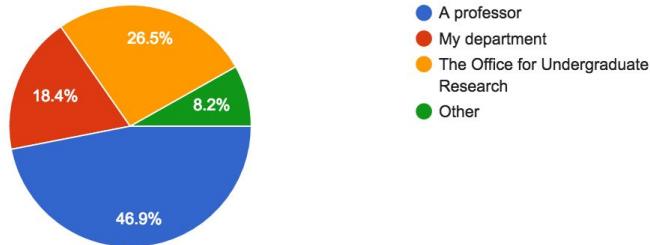
YM: We don't use LinkedIn very well. I would really like for us to be able to leverage that. Monica and the team in general have discussed using it to get to young alumni, recent graduates. To find out more information about where they went, how they used research beyond undergrad careers. Instagram is a great idea, I just don't have the bandwidth to post as much as I want. Don't have the time or attention.

## SURVEY RESULTS

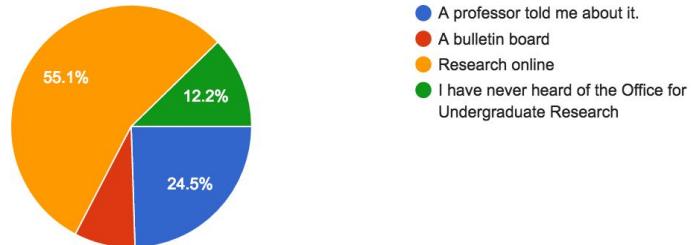
Have you ever heard of the Office for Undergraduate Research (49 responses)



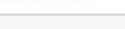
Where would you turn to first when looking for a research location?  
(49 responses)



If yes, how did you hear about the Office for Undergraduate Research?  
(49 responses)



## SOCIAL MEDIA DATA

Social Network	Sessions	% Sessions
1. Facebook	261	 63.35%
2. Twitter	78	 18.93%
3. Blogger	57	 13.83%
4. LinkedIn	6	 1.46%
5. tinyURL	4	 0.97%
6. Weebly	3	 0.73%
7. Instagram	2	 0.49%
8. Ning	1	 0.24%

## Audience Overview

Sep 26, 2015 - Sep 26, 2016

 All Users  
100.00% Sessions

Overview

Sessions

10,000



Sessions

**56,365**

Pages / Session

**2.18**

% New Sessions

**52.56%**

Users

**30,777**

Avg. Session Duration

**00:02:04**

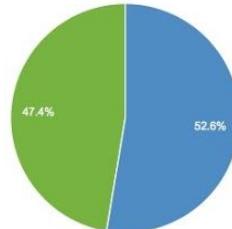
Pageviews

**123,014**

Bounce Rate

**58.32%**

New Visitor Returning Visitor



## Language

1. en-us

Sessions % Sessions

53,109 94.22%

2. (not set)

1,057 1.88%

3. zh-cn

443 0.79%

4. en-gb

384 0.68%

5. en

289 0.51%

6. pt-br

145 0.26%

7. ko

126 0.22%

8. es

79 0.14%

9. fr

61 0.11%

10. c

52 0.09%

## Referral Traffic

Sep 26, 2015 - Sep 26, 2016

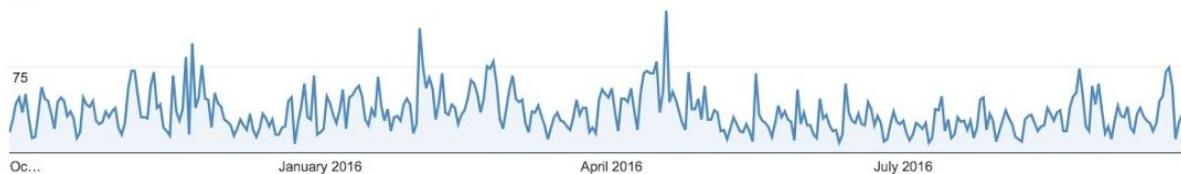
 All Users  
22.98% Sessions

Explorer

Summary

Sessions

150



Source	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions		
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions	Goal Value
	12,955 % of Total: 22.98% (56,365)	56.40% Avg for View: 52.56% (7.29%)	7,306 % of Total: 24.66% (29,627)	56.52% Avg for View: 58.32% (-3.09%)	2.23 Avg for View: 2.18 (2.34%)	00:01:58 Avg for View: 00:02:04 (-5.30%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	\$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (\$0.00)
1. unc.edu	<b>5,019</b> (38.74%)	49.47%	<b>2,483</b> (33.99%)	50.15%	2.54	00:02:27	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. research.unc.edu	<b>1,241</b> (9.58%)	75.83%	<b>941</b> (12.88%)	37.15%	2.89	00:02:29	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. cf.unc.edu	<b>770</b> (5.94%)	14.42%	<b>111</b> (1.52%)	32.08%	2.28	00:01:36	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
4. admissions.unc.edu	<b>668</b> (5.16%)	67.07%	<b>448</b> (6.13%)	64.97%	1.78	00:01:25	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
5. honorscarolina.unc.edu	<b>533</b> (4.11%)	45.97%	<b>245</b> (3.35%)	51.97%	2.38	00:02:22	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
6. ourblog.web.unc.edu	<b>316</b> (2.44%)	15.51%	<b>49</b> (0.67%)	38.29%	3.13	00:03:28	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
7. sph.unc.edu	<b>201</b> (1.55%)	61.19%	<b>123</b> (1.68%)	71.14%	1.70	00:01:13	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
	<b>187</b> (1.44%)		<b>187</b> (2.56%)					0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
8. traffic2cash.xyz		100.00%		100.00%	1.00	00:00:00	0.00%		
9. curricula.unc.edu	<b>181</b> (1.40%)	79.56%	<b>144</b> (1.97%)	61.88%	1.86	00:01:38	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
10. facebook.com	<b>178</b> (1.37%)	28.65%	<b>51</b> (0.70%)	65.73%	2.06	00:03:05	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

Rows 1 - 10 of 294

## Overview

Sep 26, 2015 - Sep 26, 2016

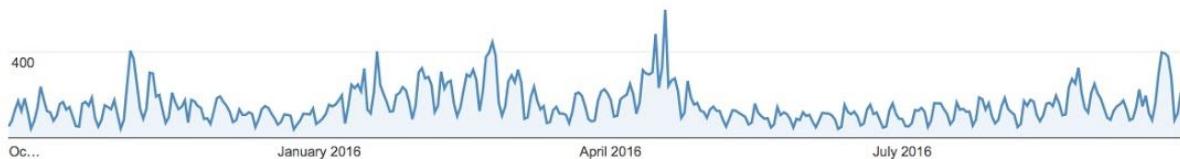
All Users  
100.00% Sessions

Explorer

Summary

Sessions

800



Device Category	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversions		
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions	Goal Value
	56,365 % of Total: 100.00% (56,365)	52.63% Avg for View: 52.56% (0.13%)	29,666 % of Total: 100.13% (29,627)	58.32% Avg for View: 58.32% (0.00%)	2.18 Avg for View: 2.18 (0.00%)	00:02:04 Avg for View: 00:02:04 (0.00%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	\$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (\$0.00)
1. desktop	<b>46,588</b> (82.65%)	50.04%	23,313 (78.58%)	55.88%	2.28	00:02:15	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. mobile	<b>8,650</b> (15.35%)	64.12%	5,546 (18.69%)	70.97%	1.64	00:01:05	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. tablet	<b>1,127</b> (2.00%)	71.61%	807 (2.72%)	61.93%	2.11	00:01:56	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

Rows 1 - 3 of 3

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*LOGOS*





## PRESENT AT THE CELEBRATION OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

<http://our.unc.edu/symposia/cur/>

The Celebration of Undergraduate Research (CUR) is an annual research symposium for UNC undergrads held in the Frank Porter Graham Student Union. Students present posters and deliver talks in concurrent poster and platform sessions.

### Who should participate?

- UNC-Chapel undergraduates who have worked on a research project as part of a course or as an employee or mentee working in collaboration with faculty, post-doctoral scholars, or graduate students
- Recipients of Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships
- Participants in the Chancellor's Science Scholars program, HHMI Future Scientists and Clinicians program, or HHMI Future Teachers program, or Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (MURAP)

### Why should you participate?

- Showcase your research
- Meet other undergraduates who have engaged in research
- Discuss your research ideas with student colleagues, faculty, and staff
- Develop skills in preparing poster and oral presentations
- Celebrate the success of undergraduates at UNC-Chapel Hill!

### Who is invited to attend the Celebration of Undergraduate Research?

- The general public
- All faculty and students
- All university administrators including the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors and Provosts, and School Deans

If you are interested in participating, please check the OUR website in early Spring. Typically, abstracts are due to OUR by March 1 at <http://our.unc.edu/symposia/cur/>.



# Undergraduate Research in the Humanities

Are you interested in ENGLISH  
HISTORY  
COMMUNICATIONS  
and other disciplines within the HUMANITIES?



**Come learn more with OUR!**

When? Wednesday, October 7, 2015

5 – 6:30 p.m.

Where? The Donovan Lounge  
Greenlaw 223



Office for  
Undergraduate  
Research

220 Graham Memorial      T: (919) 843-7763  
Campus Box 2800      F: (919) 962-1548  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-2800      <http://our.unc.edu>



## Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURFs)

<http://our.unc.edu/students/funding-opportunities/fellowships/surf/>

All currently enrolled UNC-Chapel Hill undergraduate students in good academic standing who will graduate after November 2016 and who wish to engage in undergraduate research, scholarship or performance for at least 9 weeks, with a minimum 20 hours/week, between May and August are eligible to apply. Students must be enrolled the semester before (spring) and the semester after (fall) completion of the SURF.

The projects must be carried out under the supervision of a UNC-Chapel Hill faculty research advisor, and additional collaboration with a postdoctoral fellow or graduate student mentor is encouraged. Each student may submit only ONE SURF application per year.

Students who have received a SURF award in previous years are not eligible to apply. SURF recipients may not accept a Burch Fellowship, NASA grant, or other significant funding for the same summer.

We expect to make at least 60 individual awards of \$3,000 each. Selected students will receive \$2,000 at the start of the summer, and the remainder of the award after they have submitted the required final materials and the materials are approved by OUR.

There are four required parts of the SURF application:

- On-Line Application
- Proposal: 1200 words, submitted via email as .pdf
- Faculty advisor letter of support: submitted via email as .pdf
- Official UNC Transcript: deliver to OUR in Graham Memorial Room 221

**All four parts of the application must be received by 4pm on the due date posted on-line for the Spring semester (typically mid-late February).**

You may request the support of a SURF Peer Writing Advisor via the webpage.

A multidisciplinary faculty committee will meet to select the SURF recipients based on the written application and the faculty research advisor's recommendation letter. The committee will assess each proposal based on the criteria described in the SURF rubric available on the OUR webpage (see <https://our.unc.edu/files/2013/01/SURF-Rubric.pdf>). Applicants will be notified of the committee's decision by April 15.

