



Undergraduate
Research Center

U R S C A S C E N E



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**Special points of
interest:**

- **URSCA Informational Meeting**
2/5/08, CKNB N111, 4pm
- **URSCA Proposal Deadline**
3/18/08
- **Scholars Week**
3/31/08 through 4/4/08
- **URC Website:**
<http://www.mtsu.edu/urc/>

From the Director

The success of undergraduate students doing research and creative work at MTSU is self evident. These four pages give you a brief glimpse of the exciting activity going on across campus. In addition to students representing MTSU at the State Capitol in February, we have 3 students competing with UG students across the nation to present their work at the U.S. Capitol in Washington in April. Congratulations to all of these students and their faculty mentors who spend many hours teaching

their protégés the craft and art of scholarship in their discipline.

Do not forget about the next URSCA deadline, **March 18th**, for submitting proposals for funding during the summer and/or fall terms. I am conducting a workshop on **Feb 5th** at 4pm in CKNB N111 to provide information about the process of submitting an URSCA proposal. All UG students are welcome but I encourage students who have not previously submitted a proposal to attend this meeting. After the presentation, I will conduct a Q&A

session.

Another important event on campus during the Spring Semester is Scholars Week. Scholars Week showcases the research and creative work of faculty members, undergraduate and graduate students. It is an event for everyone. Mark March 31-April 4 on your calendar and make plans to participate. See you there!

Sincerely,

Dr. L. Diane Miller, Director

Annual Posters At the Capitol Event Coming Up Feb 6th in Nashville

Congratulations to our students who have been chosen to present their research to our legislators!

Richard Andersen



Geosciences

Taylor Barnes



Physics

Stephanie Mills



Music

Jeremy Minton



Psychology

Eugene Siebert



ETIS

Andrea VanHoozer



Psychology

URSCA Announces Recipients for Spring/Summer 2008

The Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Committee (URSCA) awarded over \$44,000.00 last October to students who applied to pursue research or creative activity in their field of interest. This amount was awarded in stipends, supplies and travel to 32 students who applied to either be an assistant or a scholar. The 18 students funded at the assistant level will contribute to a faculty member's project, and those 14 students funded at the scholar level will take more ownership of their project while collaborating with one or more faculty members. The committee received 45 proposals to review, with the majority, 19, coming from the College of Mass Communication. Students from the College of Liberal Arts submitted 12 proposals, while students from the College of Education and Behavioral Science contributed 8. The College of Basic and Applied Sciences also had 5 proposals submitted, and the College of Business, 1. Our congratulations to all students and faculty mentors!

14 Scholars:

- Richard Anderson
- John Bohannon
- Silviu Ciulei
- Eric Fields
- Sue Ann Holton
- Sataree Khuansuwan
- Lenora Leithauser
- Kevin Martin
- Shane McCoy
- Jaclyn Pearson
- Amy Petty
- Nathan Toth
- Marcus Walton
- Kyle Williams

18 Assistants:

- Joshua Bonner
- Jessica Busler
- Eric Carlson
- Rickey Crowe
- Bridgett Howard
- James Kamer
- Alan Laidlaw
- Byron McQuain
- Yuliya Melnikova
- Spencer Pelton
- Chandlin Ringgold
- Austin Shannon
- Jacob Spaulding
- Sarah VanWicklin
- Jay Yaskin
- Thomas Dyer
- Timothy Miller
- Amanda Queen

MTSU Hosts Tennessee's Undergraduate Social Science Symposium

"This year's program featured a paper competition with cash prizes and certificates of honor awarded to students for excellence in research scholarship in the Social Sciences."

This year's 16th Annual TN Social Science Symposium *Migrations* was a great success. Held on November 15th and 16th in the James Union Building an estimated 600 students, staff and faculty from MTSU and neighboring universities attended the conference and approximately 60 students made research paper presentations. Highlights included a keynote address by Professor Katharine Donato of the Center for the Americas of Vanderbilt University and a thematic panel discussion with local representatives of migrant communities. A favorite event sponsored by our student organizations included a highly entertaining award-winning documentary film, *God Grew Tired of Us*. The heart-breaking, yet hopeful film documented the culture shock and travails of four "lost boys" who were rescued from the political turmoils of the Sudan and resettled in the United States.

In her evening keynote lecture Professor Donato documented some of the issues surrounding the Immigration debate. She showed specific Latino migration patterns from Central America and the relationship of these community gateways to industrial demand in non-metropolitan regions. Her presentation featured the many complexities related to the emergence of new immigrant communities and indicators of inter-generational work, health, family and educational well-being. Another important highlight of the symposium was a mid-day thematic panel discussion with local migrant representatives on Immigration in the American South. A key theme in the discussion was the importance of policies that assist in citizenship and legal migration to the US. Spokes-persons included Juan Canedo, representing the Progresso Community Center, Kerry Foley of the Somali Community Center, Kamaran Abdullah of the Kurdish Community Center, and Professor Katharine Donato of Vanderbilt's Center for the Americas.

Student paper panel presentations ran throughout the two-day symposium. Paper panel themes included migrations, study-abroad, religion and culture, the archaeology of cemeteries, American attitudes on race-ethnicity, gender and product marketing, Appalachia arts and crafts, Holocaust and hate crimes, and sociologies of the Southern region. This year's program featured a paper competition with cash prizes and certificates of honor awarded to students for excellence in research scholarship in the Social Sciences. First place was awarded to archaeology student, Teresa Ingalls for her paper titled, "Animal Use at a Mississippian Elite Structure, Castalian Springs Site." Second place was awarded to Anthropology majors Erica Roe-Fehrman and Cynthia Pace for their paper titled, "Growth and Nutritional Status: Changes Among School-Aged Children in the Brazilian Amazon." Third place awards were given to two sociology seniors, Mary A. Hamner for her paper titled, "Are Married Couples Happier than the Unmarried?" and Tara Perrin for her paper, "Extrinsic or Intrinsic Rewards for Work: Predictors of Job Satisfaction." Two other students received certificates of honorary distinction, sociology major JaDee Carathers for her paper titled, "Bleeding Hearts and Wounded Souls: Contextual Analysis of the Blues in Origin and Tradition" and Melanie Gavami, Psychology major for her paper, "Female Genital Mutilation or Female Circumcision?"

Katrina Davis,
Ja Dee Carathers,
and Melanie
Gavami present
papers.



The symposium concluded with a brown-bag luncheon panel discussion on Careers in the Social Sciences. Several alumni, students, and MTSU faculty provided insights on how the social sciences inform their current careers in a variety of jobs including teaching, policing, transportation, library sciences, labor policies and unionization, and child, health and human services.

STEP^{MT}

Stepping Up Undergraduate Research

Faculty Intern Mentor (Step-In)

STEP^{MT} invites faculty applications for collaborative projects with industrial partners that involve student interns.

The proposal must describe an industrial project defined by a faculty member in collaboration with an industrial partner to be carried out by a student in an 8 week (300 hour) period. The faculty mentor will guide the student through the STEP end-of-summer poster preparation and presentation.

STEP^{MT} shares the cost of the student stipend with the company (\$2,000 per student each; total \$4000 per student).

There are two options:

Option 1: The faculty member arranges a student research internship at a company, during which the faculty member acts as a secondary mentor for the student, interacting with the industry mentor to help specify and clarify the project. The faculty stipend for this option is \$1,000.

Option 2: The faculty member not only mentors the student but actively participates in a collaborative industry-related research project conducted primarily at MTSU. The faculty stipend for this option is \$2,500.

Proposals are due March 11, 2008.

StepUP-DATES for Step^{MT}



STEP^{MT} faculty applications for summer research teams were due January 4.

- STEP^{MT} is sponsoring a workshop about summer research opportunities at Oak Ridge National Lab on January 17 from 3-4:30 PM in KOM 252.
- The third STEP^{MT} 2007-08 Academic Year Undergraduate Research Award deadline is Wednesday, February 27.
- Faculty applications to participate in the STEP-IN industry research mentoring program are due by March.

Please see www.mtsu.edu/~stepmt for more information about these programs.

Fall 2007 Exhibition of Student Research – Human Impacts on Ancient Environments



John Miller (above), Salina Branson (right), and Alison Carey (far right) present research as part of the class

requirements for ANTH 4620: Environmental Archaeology. John conducted research on the evidence of slash-and-burn agriculture for the Maya Lowlands. Salina studied Seasonal Settlement Patterns of Cave Sites from the Southeastern United States, and Alison studied the 19th Century Cultural Significance of Plants in the Great Basin.



Studying Asia's Past

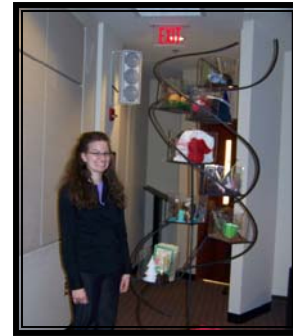
Teresa Ingalls presents her research on Ban Non Wat, a prehistoric site situated in Northern Thailand which is informing the ways archaeologists and historians view the



events of Southeast Asia's past. Teresa chose this topic as part of the research requirements for ANTH 3710, The Archaeology of Death.

Honoring Her Ancestors

Hannah Green stands next to her sculpture, "Genetic Heirloom," as she prepares to present her honors thesis last November. Hannah created a three-dimensional sculpture that credits women in her own



life in a way that praises the roles of all women in general. Her project was funded by URSCA.

Introduction to Linguistics Invites Faculty to Poster Sessions

Last fall, students enrolled in Dr. Aleka Blackwell's ENGL 3570 Introduction to Linguistics conducted research projects which culminated in two poster sessions to which colleagues in the English department and in the Linguistic Studies Minor were invited.

Students had a choice of addressing a research question of their choice or of selecting one of several research questions raised in class lectures. The purpose of the activity was (i) to introduce students to the process of conducting a linguistics research project (constructing a hypothesis, developing an appropriate research design, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions) and (ii) to teach students how to create an academic poster. In addition, students were expected to practice presenting their poster orally to those who attended the poster session. The instruction for and preparation of these

projects spanned the length of the semester.

The poster sessions were scheduled during two class meetings. Students had the choice of using tri-fold poster boards, printing individual powerpoint slides, or printing a single large poster. The classroom was arranged so the presenters could line up along the four walls and the visitors could walk from poster to poster. The posters were numbered, and the numbering matched a program which was distributed to those who attended the poster session. Evaluation forms were used by the students who were not presenting to complete while examining each of their classmates' posters. Several English faculty, as well as Dr. Diane Miller and Dean John McDaniel, attended at least one of the poster sessions.

The poster sessions were quite successful. The turnout was wonderful, with at least a

dozen faculty visiting each poster session. The student projects were excellent overall.

Throughout the semester students were encouraged to think of these projects as opportunities for presenting during Scholars Week (March 31-April 4) or as pilot projects for research proposals to be submitted for funding through the URSCA program (next deadline 3/18/08). Dr. Blackwell evaluated all the posters with Scholars Week 2008 in mind, giving specific suggestions to the students about ways to improve their project in time for the February 11, 2008 abstract submission deadline. Of the 24 projects, six are ready for submission. These projects were well-designed, well-executed, and brilliantly presented, both in terms of the appearance of the poster and in terms of the quality of the oral presentations by the student researchers. Congratulations to all students who presented their work at this event.