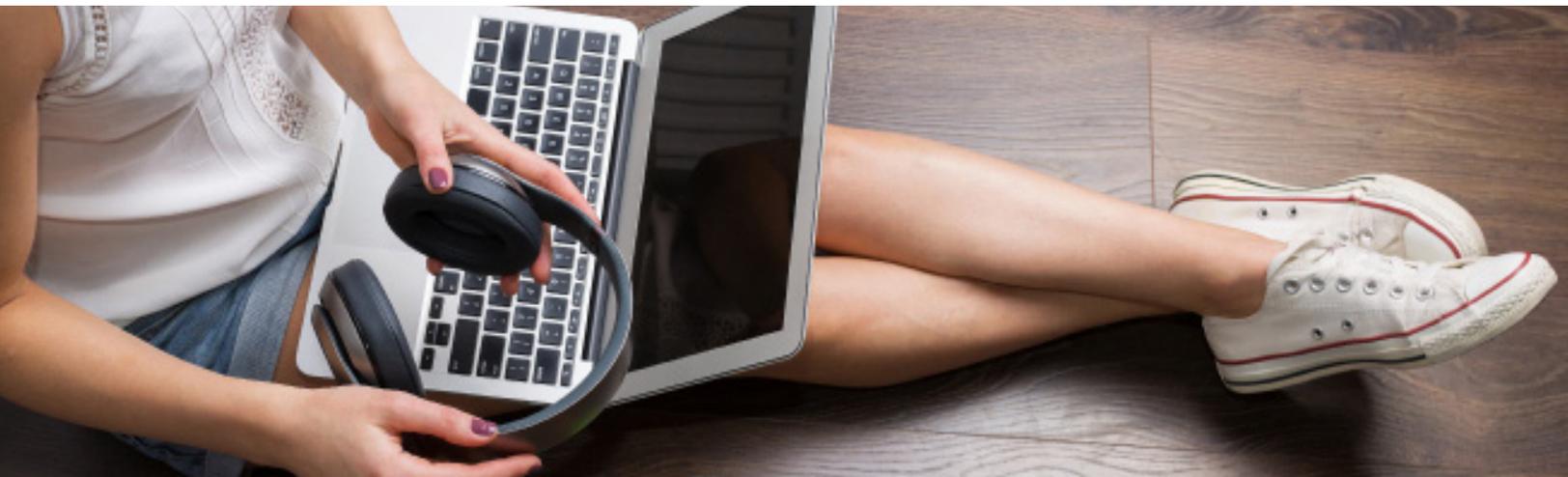




# **KSU** UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2016 • VOLUME 6 • ISSUE 1





# HIGHLIGHTS

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# KSU'S NEW



Office of Undergraduate Research

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The mission of the Office of Undergraduate Research at Kennesaw State University is to promote high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship in all disciplines across campus. We aim to make research an integral part of the undergraduate experience at Kennesaw State University and to become a premier resource for undergraduate research both at KSU and nationally.

# OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

July 1st marked the beginning of the newly created Office of Undergraduate Research at Kennesaw State University. Previously a Faculty Fellow and then Associate Director position at KSU's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), undergraduate research has grown so much that an office was developed.

The director of the office is Dr. Amy Buddie, who started working at KSU in 2003 as a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and who served as both a CETL Faculty Fellow and Associate Director for Undergraduate Research. According to Dr. Buddie, "As our campus has grown, so has undergraduate research. Students in all disciplines on our campus

are engaging in scholarship and making a contribution to the body of work in their field. This office is designed to help undergraduate scholars and their faculty mentors by providing resources and celebrating their accomplishments."

Housed in the Office of Research, the Office of Undergraduate Research coordinates a number of initiatives:

- The Office will serve as the hub for organizing the 2019 National Conference on Undergraduate Research, which will be held at KSU April 11-13, 2019.
- Students can apply for funding to present their

research at disciplinary conferences as well as the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR).

- Faculty can apply for funding to work with teams of undergraduate researchers.
- Students can present their research at the annual Symposium of Student Scholars.
- Students can join the Undergraduate Research Club, a registered student organization on campus dedicated to promoting undergraduate scholarship.
- Students can connect with faculty members who are looking for undergraduate researchers.
- Faculty and students can become individual members of the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) for free.
- Faculty can request a class visit from the director, who can give presentations ranging from 5 minutes to the entire class period.
- Student groups and organizations who want to learn more about undergraduate research can request a presentation or meeting with the director.
- Students can publish their work in the *Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research* (KJUR).
- Readers of the website can learn more about what's going on in undergraduate research through the Undergraduate Research Newsletter and online announcements.



“Students in all disciplines on our campus are engaging in scholarship and making a contribution to the body of work in their field. This office is designed to help undergraduate scholars and their faculty mentors by providing resources and celebrating their accomplishments.”

*-Dr. Amy Buddie, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research*

There is a lot going on; if you are a student or faculty mentor already involved in undergraduate research or you just want to learn more, feel free to reach out to the director, Dr. Amy Buddie, at [abuddie@kennesaw.edu](mailto:abuddie@kennesaw.edu). For more information about the Office of Undergraduate Research, visit the website at <http://research.kennesaw.edu/our/>



# RESEARCH AT

# ZOO ATLANTA

Approximately 700 million people visit zoos annually worldwide (World Association of Zoos and Aquariums). These visitors are often drawn to the zoo to see majestic, wild animals in person, but the zoo has another mission: “We strive to inspire the citizens of Atlanta and Georgia and all visitors to the Zoo to value wildlife on Earth and to help safeguard existing species through conservation” (Mission Statement for Zoo Atlanta).

Researchers in the Department of Psychology at Kennesaw State University decided to investigate the extent to which visitors to zoo exhibits actually experience a positive change in their attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors related to conservation. In their study, undergraduate researchers recruited participants at the entrance to various exhibits in Zoo Atlanta, such as the reptile house and the gorilla habitat. Zoo visitors who agreed to participate completed an online survey (using a hand-held tablet) regarding their



*From left: Hannah Dollinger, Nichole Teal, Sarah Dutton, Alice Dawson, Montana Holland, Rena Roberson, Krystal Bailey, Vanessa Pedroni*

# Eastern Indigo Snake

*Drymarchon couperi*

**Food:** Carnivore

**Habitat:** Woodlands, scrublands

**Range:** North America

## Conservation Status:

Important refuge spots for this snake have declined with the decrease in gopher tortoise burrows; the destruction of longleaf pine forests has also contributed to the species' decline.



The eastern indigo snake's powerful jaws produce a crushing force that overpowers prey without the need for constriction or venom.



"I learned techniques in collecting data, how to approach people even when it is awkward or when they clearly do not want to be bothered, and most importantly, I know how to organize and analyze data in different systems and how to present the information I found" (Briana Dominguez, senior psychology major).

knowledge about the display they were about to enter as well as their attitudes and behaviors related to conservation and biodiversity. Then, a researcher unobtrusively followed each participant around the exhibit, recording what the visitor looked at and for how long. When participants left the exhibit, they completed an online post-test on their knowledge, attitude, and behaviors. They were emailed follow-up questionnaires 8 and 12 weeks later.

The results showed pro-conservation attitudes and intentions to change behavior usually increased from pretest to posttest, but then decreased 8 and 12 weeks later.

A large group of undergraduate researchers are required to make this project successful, and the students report learning a great deal from their experiences. As Briana Dominguez, senior psychology major, said, "I found working on this research valuable because it showed me all the hard work that goes into collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data and just how difficult and time consum-

ing it can be. I learned techniques in collecting data, how to approach people even when it is awkward or when they clearly do not want to be bothered, and most importantly, I know how to organize and analyze data in different systems and how to present the information I found."

What are the next steps? According to Dr. Suma Mallavaru, Associate Professor of Psychology and one of the faculty researchers on the project, "We see short-term increases in pro-conservation attitudes and behavior intentions after a zoo visit. Our next step is to identify how to maintain these behavior intentions and translate them into actual behavior change in the long-term." Dr. Lauren Tagliatela, Associate Professor of Psychology and the other faculty supervisor on this project, agrees: "The results are promising, as it seems zoo visitors are engaged in the idea of conservation and are ready to adopt more pro-conservation behaviors in the future. Finding that message, process, or tool to transform those motivations into actual behavior change will be our next steps."

# AFFORDABLE TEXTBOOKS

## THROUGH TREECABIN

PRESSBOOKS.COM  
Simple Book Production

It's a rewarding challenge to be the CEO of a technology startup company while finishing up a Bachelor's degree. That challenge has been on Paul Ngalle's plate for over a year now. Paul and his team of fellow student developers have foregone sleep in the hopes of launching a company completely built by their own hands.

Paul Ngalle, a KSU mechanical engineering student, says that his engineering skills help him tackle any problem that comes his way. It's a mechanical engineer's job to take a product from the idea stage to the marketplace, and that's exactly what Paul did with TreeCabin, a textbook streaming platform designed to make textbooks more accessible and affordable for students. He realized that you can only go so far with the knowledge that you already know, so research has been a huge part in successfully building his company. He took time to study Netflix (his

inspiration), the publishing industry, the e-textbook market, coding, and his desired audience. His engineering background aided him as he picked apart all of his research in order to determine what in particular would help him build the most user friendly e-textbook platform.

Research may seem boring and redundant, but without it, the TreeCabin team wouldn't have been able to get a grasp on Java and CSS, which are needed to write every line of code necessary to develop a streaming textbook platform.

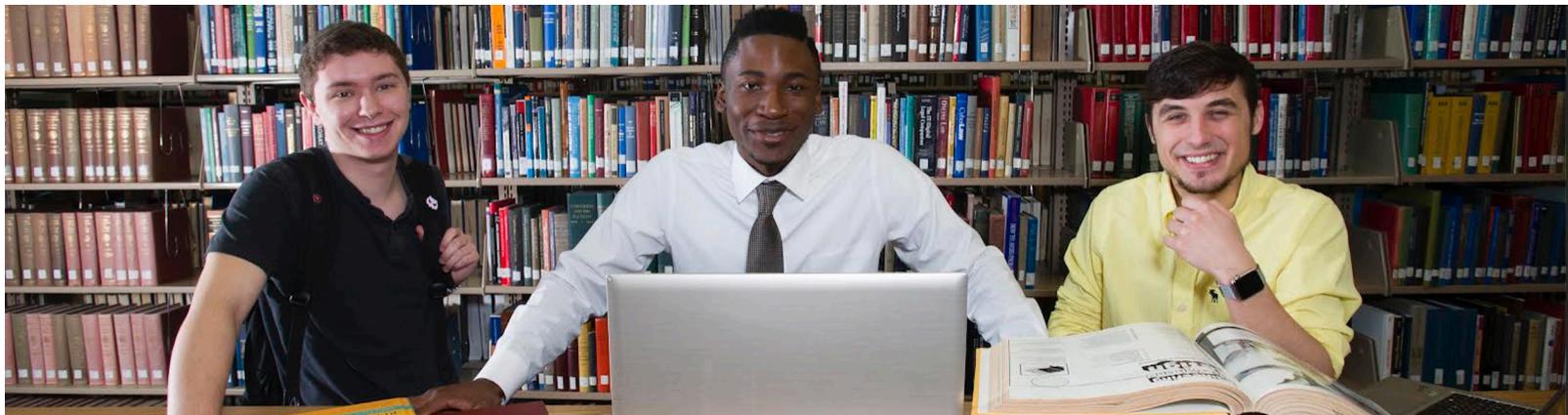
Students, while you're still in school, the TreeCabin team would advise you to learn the importance of research. Work smarter, not harder. Most of the time, there's something to be learned from other peoples' successes and failures. Learn time management skills. The development team had to master

Students, while you're still in school, the TreeCabin team would advise you to learn the importance of research.



their time if they were going to successfully learn business, sales, how to write functioning code and do well in school all at the same time. Additionally, take this time to learn how to work with a team of people. How can your teammates' strengths be combined with your strengths in order to accomplish the task at hand?

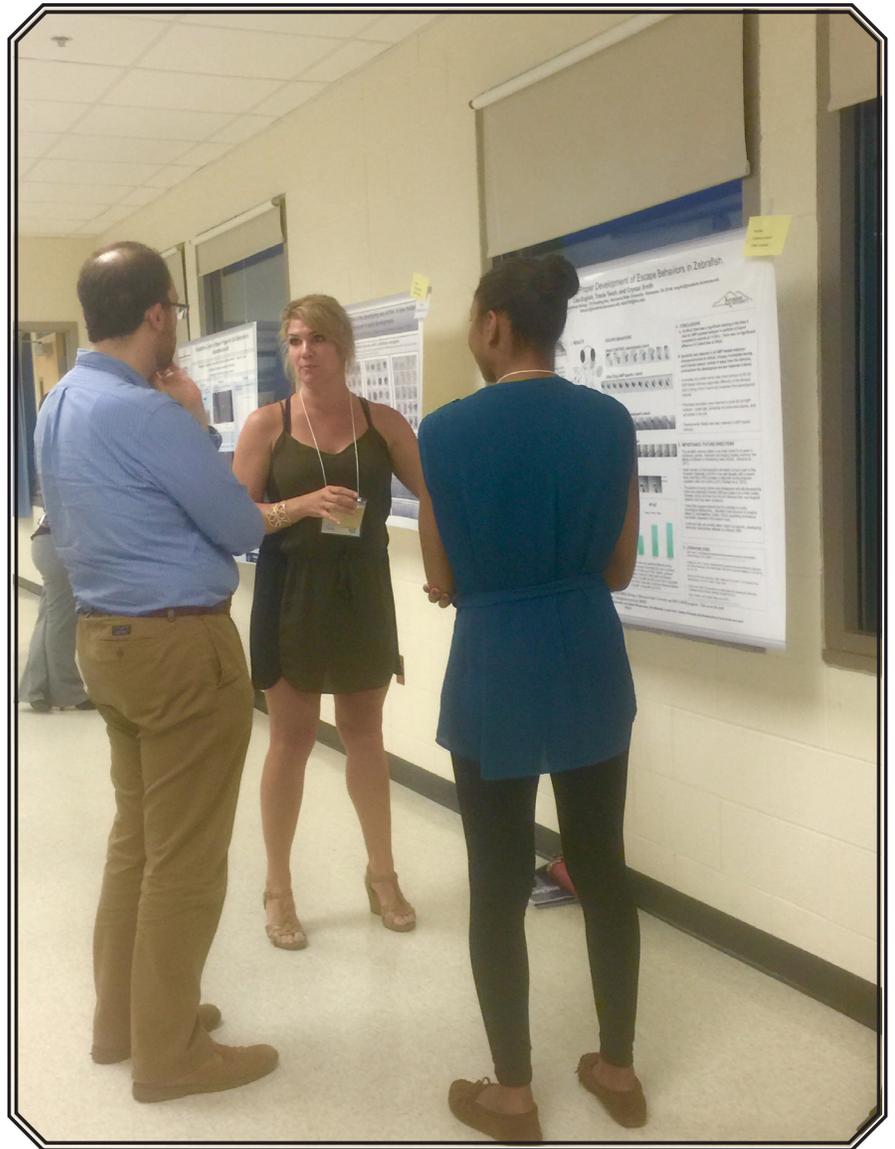
Enjoy your time, and focus in on what you're learning now. You never know which college lessons are going to help you in the "real world."



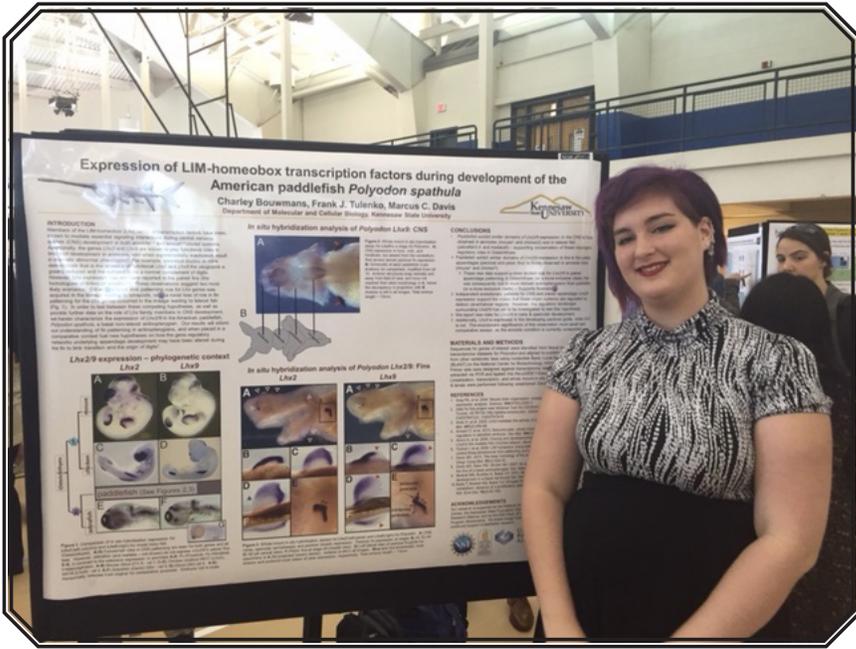
# Undergraduate Research Conferences

Presenting at a conference is a great way for students to hone their public speaking skills and disseminate the results of their research projects to the scientific community. Lucky for KSU students, they don't have to travel far to get this experience. Kennesaw State University is a hub of conferences geared toward undergraduate research. A few of note:

In 2017, KSU will host the Southeast Regional Meeting of the Society for Developmental Biology, a conference at which many undergraduates (both at KSU and in the southeast) present their research. The conference will be held May 18-20, 2017.

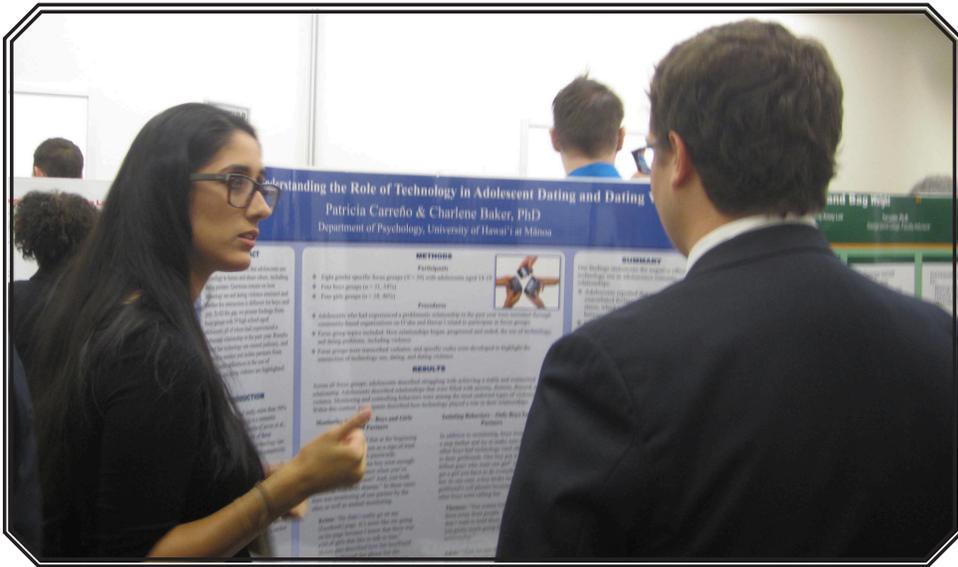


# Kennesaw State University



In 2019, KSU will host the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), which will bring to our campus nearly 5,000 undergraduate researchers and their faculty mentors from around the country. The conference will be held April 11-13, 2019.

The Georgia Undergraduate Research in Psychology (GURP) conference has been hosted at KSU for the last 15 years. Organized by KSU's Department of Psychology, the conference brings together undergraduate researchers and faculty mentors in psychology from over 20 different colleges and universities. The conference will be held April 15, 2017.



The Kennesaw Mountain Undergraduate Mathematics Conference (KMUMC), hosted by KSU's Department of Mathematics, is now entering its 6th year. Students from over 20 colleges and universities come to present their work and network with other mathematicians. The conference will be held February 17-18, 2017.

# RESEARCH TEAMS IN

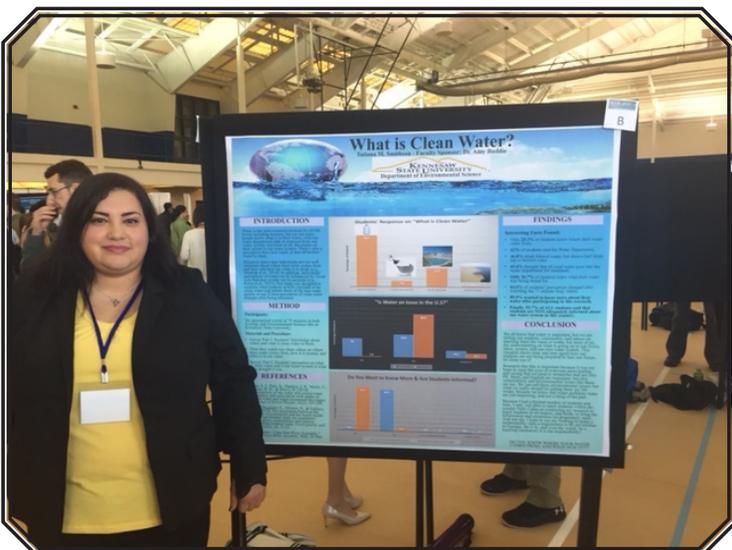
# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CLUB

What are the predictors of feeling safe versus unsafe on the KSU campus? Do KSU students know where their water comes from and how it is treated? How is sleep quality and quantity related to academic performance? What are the effects of the transition to college on health behaviors?

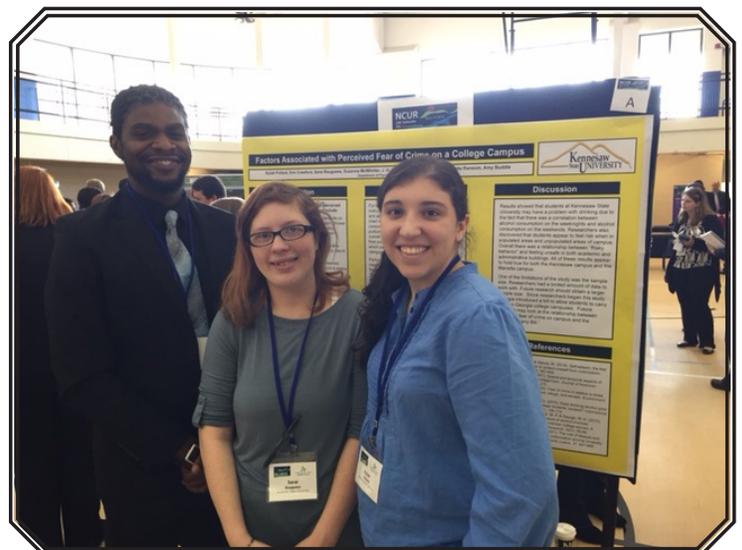
The Undergraduate Research Club (URC) is investigating these and other questions as part of the team-based research projects they work on as members of the club. Last year was the inaugural year of these projects, with two beginning in the fall and completing in the spring.

The first URC meeting of the semester in September 2015 was devoted to club members brainstorming research ideas. The favorite research ideas were chosen, and members picked which teams they wanted to join, if any. The teams worked throughout the year to read and synthesize past research on their topic, design their study, create research materials, submit their study to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), collect and analyze data, and finally, create research posters and present them at a conference.

Last year, both of the club's research projects were accepted as posters for the National Conference on Undergraduate



Tatiana Smithson (President of URC) with her poster on students' perceptions of clean water at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Asheville, NC, April 2016.



Owen Adams (member of URC), Sarai Bauguess (Treasurer of URC), and Kylah Pollard (Vice-President of URC) with their poster on students' feelings of campus safety at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Asheville, NC, April 2016.

Research (NCUR) in Asheville, North Carolina April 7-9, 2016. The club members who were involved in the research traveled as part of a larger group to Asheville, with all of their expenses paid by KSU. The students also presented their work at the Symposium of Student Scholars, which is KSU's annual undergraduate research event.

This year, the club has doubled the number of projects to four, with each of the URC officers leading one of the projects. Each team is currently working on designing their study; they are aiming to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research April 6-8, 2017 in Mem-

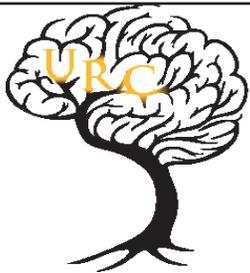
phis, Tennessee as well as at the Symposium of Student Scholars on April 20, 2017.

URC President Tatiana Smithson is enthusiastic about the research teams: "As an undergraduate student and a science major at KSU, research experience is especially important. Finding research opportunities or anyone offering research opportunities at KSU is very hard to navigate and very overwhelming at times because by the time you do find a faculty member who's doing research, they're either not accepting anyone, they have a waiting list, or you're not qualified enough. That's not the case for URC because we

accept all students with any major, passion, experience level, and GPA. URC has given me the opportunity to not only head my own research project but also to help students begin their own research journey within their major. No student should ever turn ANY research opportunity away because research can open so many doors and most of all, teach you the research process."

According to the faculty advisor for Undergraduate Research Club, Dr. Amy Buddie (Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Professor of Psychology), "The students have really stepped up with these research projects. Undergraduate Research Club is offering KSU students a valuable opportunity to be involved in a research project from the ground floor up – the club members decide on the projects, they work through the process of designing their study and the research materials, and they make sure that they stay on track so they can be ready to submit conference abstracts and eventually present the results of their hard work at KSU as well as nationally."

If you would like more information about Undergraduate Research Club, visit <http://research.kennesaw.edu/our/students/urc.php>



## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CLUB

### Why join us today?

We want to close the gap between you and faculty who are doing research. You can also come together with students within the club to come up with a research project of your own, and we can help you with the process. We need students who are dedicated, hardworking and excited about research, but most of all who understand that any type of research experience, even one not within their field, is very important too!!!

Here are some of the things we have lined up:

- National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Memphis, TN
- Posters on the Hill in Washington D.C.
- Group Research Opportunities
- Faculty-Assisted Research

These are just some of the things we have planned for our club, and we would love for you to join us on this journey!!



Contact us at [URCKennesaw@gmail.com](mailto:URCKennesaw@gmail.com)



**Join Us & Gain Research Experience**

**Meet People within Your Field of Study**

**Add to Your Resume**

**Learn How Research Works**

**Meetings This Fall:  
September 21st  
October 19th  
November 16th**

**Clendenin Building  
ROOM 1009 at 2:00**

**URC**

Kennesaw State University  
Kennesaw, GA

# STUDENT RESEARCHERS EXPLORE THE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS

In Georgia, the number of adults age 60+ is projected to grow to over 2.5 million (or 1 in 5) by 2030. To help Cobb County prepare for this growing demographic, Dr. Evelina Sterling, a Lecturer of Sociology, and a multi-disciplinary team of students, including Henriette N’Kodia, Rosa King, Gayle Kruger (KSU Class of 2016) and Brandon McCollum (graduate student) worked with Cobb County Senior Services to collect data on the changing needs of older adults. They started with collecting exploratory qualitative data through focus groups. Transcriptions of the focus groups were analyzed for themes.

The results revealed several interesting patterns. For example, focus group participants reported that having opportunities for socialization are a high priority, especially opportunities to develop friendships with people their own age as well as romantic relationships. Participants also reported a strong desire to address community concerns, such as education, transportation, and homelessness. They wanted to learn more from experts about specific issues affecting older adults, such as healthcare, nutrition, prescription drug costs, and insurance changes. They expressed a desire to contribute to their community through valuable part-time work and volunteering. They also talked about safety issues (e.g., internet security; phone scams; being taken advantage of by others, including family members and healthcare providers). Overall, participants reported that they are very interested in future planning and want to be actively involved with decision-making.



The research team presents their poster at the 2016 Symposium of Student Scholars.

From left: Henriette N’Kodia (Biology Major), Gayle Kruger (Sociology Major), Dr. Evelina Sterling (Lecturer of Sociology), and Rosa King (Undeclared Major).

In the future, the team plans to expand their research to include more specific quantitative data and an additional focus on traditionally underserved populations, such as Spanish-speakers, LGBTIQ and men. These data will help Cobb County inform their strategic plan for effectively meeting the needs of older adults as well as result in several publications and presentations for Dr. Sterling and her student research team.

# SYMPOSIUM OF STUDENT SCHOLARS: CHANGES FOR 2017

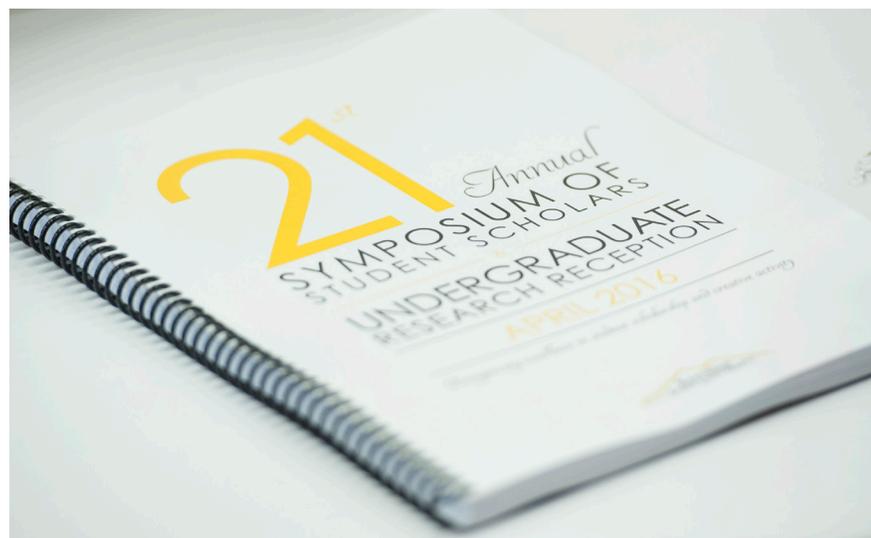


In addition, for the first time, graduate students will be included in the Symposium of Students, making this the first Symposium to be truly inclusive of all students. Posters, presentations, and performances will be noted as either Graduate or Undergraduate at the event and in the program.

This year's Symposium is shaping up to be the biggest yet; you won't want to miss it. For more information, visit <http://research.kennesaw.edu/our/presenting-publishing/student-scholars.php>

Every April, hundreds of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members descend upon the Convocation Center to celebrate undergraduate research and creative activity conducted at KSU during the last academic year. Students present posters, oral presentations, creative works, and performances. Mark your calendars for this year's Symposium of Student Scholars: **April 20, 2017.**

Several changes are planned for 2017. First, the event has grown so large that one poster session is not enough -- a second poster session will be added.



# IMPORTANT DATES!

## **Undergraduate Research Club (URC) meeting is November 16, 2016**

URC is a Registered Student Organization on campus dedicated to promoting undergraduate research. The club meets each month to discuss initiatives and help support KSU's undergraduate researchers. All KSU students are welcome to attend; no experience necessary. **The meeting will be held at 2:00pm in Clendenin Room 1009.**

## **Student Travel Fund Applications (URCA) are due December 2, 2016**

The Office of Undergraduate Research is proud to sponsor travel awards for undergraduates who have been accepted to present their work at conferences. Students can apply for a maximum of \$500 to be used to offset costs associated with conference travel (e.g., registration, transportation). **Future Deadlines: February 3, 2017 and April 7, 2017.**

## **National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) submissions are due December 2, 2016**

NCUR is the largest conference on undergraduate research in the country. The Office of Undergraduate Research will pay all expenses for at least one undergraduate per submission that is accepted to the conference. **NCUR will be held in Memphis, TN April 6-8, 2017.**

## **Faculty Funding (CARET) Applications are due January 30, 2017**

This funding program is designed to encourage and support faculty engagement in research or creative activities with undergraduate student collaborators using a team approach. **Faculty can apply for up to \$7500 in funding.**

## **Symposium of Student Scholars submissions are due March 20, 2017**

The Symposium of Student Scholars is an event to showcase student scholarship conducted at KSU during the past academic year. All students, graduate and undergraduate, who have worked on a research/creative activity project during the 2016-2017 academic year are encouraged to complete a submission form so their work can be recognized. **The Symposium of Student Scholars will be held on April 20, 2017.**



### **Office of Undergraduate Research**

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