



Fall 2015 UConn IDEA Grant Award Recipients

Congratulations to the nineteen UConn undergraduates who have been awarded UConn IDEA Grants! Fifteen of the award recipients will be completing individual projects, and four will be working on collaborative group projects.

The award recipients represent a variety of disciplines, from Ecology & Evolutionary Biology to Sports Management, Nursing to Graphic Design.

Special thanks to the faculty and staff that supported student applications to the UConn IDEA Grant and to those who will be mentoring the award recipients as they complete their projects.

Individual Projects

Margo Bailey '17 (Marketing, BUS)

Bilingual Spanish-English Toy Marketing as a Catalyst for Cultural Awareness: The Effect on Parents and Children in the Toy Market

- Margo will investigate how multinational toy companies can leverage advertising and promotional efforts to influence the values of cultural awareness promoted by parents and instilled in young children.

Lucas Bladen '19 (Political Science, CLAS; Human Rights, CLAS)

No Place Like Home: A Study of North African Refugee and Immigrant Integration in French Politics and Culture

- Lucas will conduct a qualitative research study that explores French citizens' perceptions of the political and cultural integration of North African refugees and economic immigrants.

Elizabeth Charash '18 (History, CLAS)

The Faces of the Gun Violence Prevention Movement

- Elizabeth will examine the gun violence prevention movement in America, researching grassroots organizations and the culture surrounding the American affliction with guns to better share the stories of those affected.

Brock Chimileski '17 (Physiology and Neurobiology, CLAS; Molecular and Cell Biology, CLAS)

Defining Orexin Neuron Plasticity in the Lateral Hypothalamic Area in Response to Changing Metabolic Conditions

- Through single cell transcriptional profiling, Brock will investigate gene expression in orexin neurons during changes in metabolic state. Orexin neurons regulate energy homeostasis and wakefulness, and thus this study may reveal mechanisms underlying hunger, weight regulation, and obesity.

Xena Cordero '18 (Sociology, CLAS; Urban Studies, CLAS)

Teaching Liberation and Discrimination: An Investigation of the Influence of an Ethnic Studies Program in a Culturally Diverse Classroom

- Xena will design and implement an Africana and Latino Studies history curriculum in an incoming 8th grade class composed primarily of Latino/Hispanic and Black students participating in a summer enrichment program.

Christina Cotte '17 (Molecular and Cell Biology, CLAS; Pathobiology, CANHR)

B-1 Cell Generation in Transgenic Mouse Model of Sickle Cell Disease

- Christina's research will focus on what causes the B-1 subset of B cells to be depleted in Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). She will test for the defective portion of the cells' development by conducting bone marrow transplants in a humanized transgenic SCD mouse model and analyzing B cell counts.

Ivy Horan '19 (Pre-Teaching, Elementary Education, ACES)

Diversity in the World of Education

- Ivy will study the effects of diversity in education through connecting with organizations in Boston that place teachers of minority backgrounds into Boston area schools and speaking with teachers from diverse backgrounds about their placement experiences.

Caitlin Jagla '17 (Molecular and Cell Biology, CLAS)

Development of Proximity Ligation Assay Protocol to Investigate CB1/OX1 Heterodimerization in HEK293 Cells and Primary Mouse Neurons

- Caitlin will use proximity ligation assays to investigate CB1/OX1 heterodimerization in HEK293 cells and neurons to contribute to the development of alternatives to opioid pain medications.

Jessica Joseph '17 (Psychology, CLAS)

Phonetic Integration

- Jessica will investigate whether sound symbolism is an example of integration – when information in one modality influences the interpretation of information in another modality – by examining the effects of seeing a shape on speech sound perception. Her experiment utilizes the "Bouba-Kiki" Effect, an exemplification of sound symbolism, and applies a new methodology: the phoneme identification task.

Max Klein '17 (Sports Management, ED)

The Impact of Social Factors on a Drafted High School Baseball Player's Decision to Attend College or Sign a Professional Contract

- Max will conduct a series of in-person and phone interviews culminating in a qualitative, exploratory study to determine what social factors impact a drafted high school baseball player's decision to attend college or sign a professional contract.

Brian Liang '17 (Molecular and Cell Biology, CLAS)

Investigating the Role of Collagen in Nanoparticle-Cancer Cell Interactions

- Brian's research project will elucidate the cancer tumor targeting mechanism of mesoporous silica nanoparticles.

Genevieve Nuttall '17 (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, CLAS)

Does Plumage Color in Birds Respond to Environmental Change?

- Genevieve will explore the effect of habitat degradation and environmental changes on the plumage coloration of birds.

Raeanne Nuzzo '17 (Art - Graphic Design, SFA)

Fear: The Culture

- Raeanne will complete an interactive design project that examines statements about danger and fear from the current presidential primary campaign, paired with the hashtag "#FearTheCulture" printed over a variety of images from sensationalized media, as a method of exploring the contemporary American culture of fear.

Nicholas Russo '18 (Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, CLAS)

*Dispersal of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (*Adelges tsugae* Annand) during Avian Spring Migration*

- Nicholas will investigate the role of migratory birds in the spread of the hemlock woolly adelgid – an invasive insect pest – by mist-netting birds from spring migration through the breeding season and collecting hemlock woolly adelgid nymphs from their feathers.

Srinivas Srirangam '17 (Physiology and Neurobiology, CLAS)

Understanding the Nucleophilic Characteristics of Hemoglobin through Amino Acid Labeling and Mass Spectrometry

- Srinivas will analyze the rate of covalent modification of the lysine and histidine residues that are located near the alpha helices of hemoglobin through amino acid labeling and multiple-reaction-monitoring mass spectrometry to determine the nucleophilic characteristics of hemoglobin.

Group Projects

Alexander Ajayi Dec. '16 (Finance, BUS)

Mahir Rana '17 (Computer Science and Engineering, ENG)

SquareOne: Connecting Driven Students

- Alexander and Mahir are developing an app-based platform connecting college students.

Minkyung Kim '18 (Nursing, NUR)

Seo-Yeon Lee '18 (Allied Health Sciences, CAHNR)

Korean American Health Fair

- Minkyung and Seo-Yeon will coordinate a two-day health fair for Korean Americans that includes educating the audience on several health topics and providing information on insurance and the healthcare system.

The UConn IDEA Grant program awards funding to support self-designed projects including artistic endeavors, community service initiatives, entrepreneurial ventures, research projects, and other original, creative and innovative projects. Undergraduates in all majors at all campuses can apply. Applications are accepted from individuals and from small groups who plan to work collaboratively on a project.

More information on the UConn IDEA Grant program can be found at <http://ugradresearch.uconn.edu/IDEA>.