



Fall 2018 UConn IDEA Grant Award Recipients

Congratulations to the 11 UConn undergraduates who have been awarded UConn IDEA Grants!

The award recipients represent a variety of disciplines, from English to materials science, and from biological sciences to design and technical theater. They will conduct independent research, develop creative works in different media, and initiate programs that engage the University community.

Special thanks to the faculty and staff who 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

Kobe Amos, Dec. '19 (Journalism, CLAS; History, CLAS)

Weathering: The Consequences of Black Birth

- Kobe will produce a short documentary video establishing the existence of weathering, the term used to refer to the consequences of discrimination and marginalization on the pregnancies of black mothers.

David Calamari '21 (Design/Technical Theater, SFA)

UConn Haunted House Project

- David plans to design, build, and operate a haunted attraction on the Storrs campus that will be open to students and the general public.

Paulina Frutos, Dec. '19 (Biological Sciences, CLAS; Environmental Science, CAHNR)

Assessment of Microbial Community Diversity and Influences in a Restored Freshwater Tidal Marsh

- Paulina's study will assess the effects of habitat heterogeneity on microbial community diversity in a restored freshwater tidal marsh. She will compare various sediment properties within the study site as well as to a natural wetland of the same type, to make inferences concerning microbial habitat quality.

James Grindley '20 (English, CLAS; Linguistics, CLAS)

The Cut of a Steer: A Contemporary American Satire

- James will be writing a 33 chapter, creative fiction novel in the broad genre of post-modern Neo American Gothic, where he will discuss a variety of current events that have defined the 21st century and the world we live in today.

Darius Javidi '20 (Molecular & Cell Biology, CLAS; Spanish, CLAS)

Exploring Social Medicine-Based Approaches to Combating Alcohol Addiction in the Colombian Amazon

- Darius will investigate the root causes and current dynamics contributing to alcoholism in an indigenous community in the Colombian Amazon.

Robert Lepore, Dec. '19 (Biological Sciences, CLAS)

Using Ecological Processes to Predict the Risk of Certain Tick-Borne Diseases

- Forest fragmentation increases population density of mice and deer, which, as they transport ticks, leads to an increase in tick abundance. By collecting ticks in fragments, Robert will uncover how fragmentation, host density, and tick abundance interact and affect the prevalence of pathogen infections.

Chineze Osakwe '21 (Political Science, CLAS; Human Rights, CLAS)

The Contradictions of Female Body Ideals

- Chineze will develop and pilot body image workshops for the Latina and African American student communities on UConn's campus in order to provide these women with a space to discuss similar and contrasting body image and ideals within the same ethnicity.

Kristen Shubert, Dec. '21 (Allied Health Sciences, CAHNR)

The Effect of Feedback on Cognitive Processes Involved in Tracking Object Histories and Learning

- Kristen's project focuses on the effects of feedback on developing children within the context of a narrative to determine the effects of different feedback types on learning and behavior.

Jasmine Smith '20 (English, CLAS)

Old/New/Inside/Out: An Exploration of Modern and Traditional Japanese Culture

- Jasmine will create a visual journal documenting experiences in the traditional, yet advanced, country of Japan, with a specific interest in traditional vs. modern culture and the public opinion of both to cultivate a collection of artwork and creative writings for an exhibition and reading on campus.

Piper Stepule, Dec. '19 (Mathematics, CLAS)

How the Utilization of Various Feeder and Seed Types Can Create a Customizable Backyard Bird Population

- Piper will study how the variety of songbird species can be altered when the type of bird feeder and bird seed used in a backyard is changed. The results will be used to theorize whether or not one can customize what species can be seen in a backyard.

Joseph Tracey '21 (Materials Science & Engineering, ENG; Computer Science & Engineering, ENG)

Virtual Reality Materials Characterization Laboratory Simulator

- Joseph aims to create a virtual reality simulation of a materials characterization laboratory where users can interact with a variety of materials characterization tools. This educational simulator will make materials characterization accessible to a general audience that may not be as familiar with materials science.

The UConn IDEA Grant program awards funding to support self-designed projects including artistic endeavors, community service initiatives, entrepreneurial ventures, research projects, and other 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>.