7th Annual FALL FRONTIERS

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH POSTER EXHIBITION

October 30, 2019
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Wilbur Cross North Reading Room
Sponsored by the
University of Connecticut

Office of Undergraduate Research
Enrichment Programs
About Frontiers in Undergraduate Research

The Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition is a multidisciplinary research forum showcasing undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative projects at the University of Connecticut. Fall Frontiers complements the longstanding spring Frontiers exhibition, providing an additional opportunity for UConn’s student researchers to share their exciting work. This is the seventh fall event sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR). This year’s exhibition includes 91 students presenting posters for 83 research and creative projects.

Students’ projects span the disciplines and include both independent research and work pursued in collaboration with other undergraduates. The projects presented reflect the invaluable contributions of research mentors, including graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, staff, and faculty members. We hope you enjoy meeting our wonderful students and learning about their innovative projects.

About the Office of Undergraduate Research

The Office of Undergraduate Research is a resource for students interested in enriching their undergraduate experience through participation in research, scholarship, and creative activity. The OUR provides information and advising to assist students in identifying relevant opportunities, as well as several funding programs to support the students and their faculty mentors.

Many of the Fall Frontiers presenters have received financial support for their projects from the OUR, which awarded over $625,000 in 2018-19 in support of students’ research and creative endeavors. These awards are funded by the Office of Undergraduate Research with generous support from the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Deans of the schools and colleges, and private donations from alumni, parents, and other friends of UConn and undergraduate research.
7th Annual Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition

Poster Exhibition  
Wednesday, October 30, 2019  
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Speaking Program  
5:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Caroline McGuire  
Executive Director, Enrichment Programs, and  
Director, Office of Undergraduate Research

Keynote Speaker

Thomas C. Katsouleas  
President, University of Connecticut

Closing Remarks

Jennifer Lease Butts  
Assistant Vice Provost, Enrichment Programs, and  
Director, Honors Program
Sequential Listing of Poster Presentations

This listing of projects includes the undergraduate student authors and their faculty mentors. Please note that this is not a comprehensive listing of mentors: many projects also reflect the contributions and mentorship of dedicated graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, and research staff members. An alphabetical listing of presenters is included at the end of the program.

1. Awareness and Outreach at Two Safety-Net Medical Neighborhoods with a High Prevalence of Tobacco Use
Maria Latta, Pharmacy Studies
Aboli Ghatpande, Pharmacy Studies
Mai Vestergaard, Pharmacy Studies & Music
Advisor: Fei Wang, Associate Clinical Professor, Pharmacy Practice

2. An Interdisciplinary Approach to Increasing Resilience to Tsunamis Using Protective Systems
Kade Courtois, Civil Engineering
Maya Rudd, Mechanical Engineering
Sean Walters, Biomedical Engineering
Advisor: Richard Christenson, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering

3. Using a Community-Based Bird-Parasite Study for the Development of a K-12 Outreach Program
Rachel Bahouth, Biological Sciences
Sharan Ghai, Biological Sciences
Amelia Mascolo, Biological Sciences & Anthropology
Advisor: Sarah Knutie, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

4a. Impact of the Undergraduate Research Assistant Program (URAP)
Adrienne Nguyen, Molecular and Cell Biology & Individualized Major: Health in the Environment
Advisor: Sharon Smith, Adjunct Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology
4b. Relationship Between Internalizing Problems and Internet Gaming Disorder Symptoms Among Treatment-Seeking Youth
Adrienne Nguyen, Molecular and Cell Biology & Individualized Major: Health in the Environment
Advisor: Kristyn Zajac, Assistant Professor, Medicine

5. Assessing Xlr3 Expression in shRNA-Xlr3 Transgenic Mouse Neocortex
Sarah Hernandez, Diagnostic Genetic Sciences
Advisor: Michael O’Neill, Associate Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

6. Characterization of the Ventricular-Subventricular Stem Cell Niche in Response to Neuraminidase-Induced Hydrocephalus
Tanya Miller, Physiology and Neurobiology
Derek Pan, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Joanne Conover, Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

7. Can Inclusive Education Programs Reduce Racial and Gender Discrimination in the Labor Market?
Mary Vlamis, Economics & Political Science
Advisor: Jorge Agüero, Associate Professor, Economics

8. Does Personal Experience Matter: Understanding Public Opinion on Immigration
Shanelle Jones, Political Science & Human Rights
Advisor: Virginia Hettinger, Associate Professor, Political Science

9. Working Toward a Safer Future: Limiting the Effects of Regulatory Capture in the Aviation Industry
Shreya Murthy, Individualized Major: Criminology & Human Rights & Finance
Advisor: David Richards, Associate Professor, Political Science & Human Rights
Advisor: Kimberly Bergendahl, Assistant Professor in Residence, Political Science
Advisor: Shareen Hertel, Associate Professor, Political Science & Human Rights
10. The Great Migration Comes to Hartford
Chloe Murphy, Africana Studies
Advisor: Fiona Vernal, Associate Professor, History

11. The Cut of a Steer: A Contemporary American Satire
James Grindley, English
Advisor: Fiona Somerset, Professor, English

12. Exploring the Upper Crust of Mesopotamian Society: An Archaeological Study of Bread Production at Tell Leilan
Stephen Baker, Physiology and Neurobiology & Anthropology
Advisor: Alexia Smith, Associate Professor, Anthropology

13. Uneven Aksak Meter in Romanian Folk Music
Maria Mandoiu, Music History & Anthropology
Advisor: Daniel Goldberg, Assistant Professor in Residence, Music

14. Exploring Social Medicine-Based Approaches to Combating Alcohol Addiction in the Colombian Amazon
Darius Javidi, Molecular and Cell Biology & Spanish
Advisor: César Abadia-Barrero, Assistant Professor, Anthropology

15. Trusting the System: The Impact of SEC Insider Trading Complaints on Stock Prices
Caitlyn Pesavento, Finance & Individualized Major: Crime, Law and Gender
Advisor: Paul Gilson, Associate Professor in Residence, Finance

16. Relationship Between Self Perceived Creativity, Religion, and Spirited Views
Yasmine Weiss, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: James Kaufman, Professor, Educational Psychology

17. Perception and Beliefs of God and Other Supernatural Beings: Development of an Instrument for Religious Head versus Heart Beliefs
Erin Blake, Individualized Major: Mental Health and Well-Being
Advisor: Crystal Park, Professor, Psychological Sciences
18. Perceived Teacher Support as a Moderator of Depression Among Transgender Youth
Nicholas Bennett, Psychological Sciences & Human Development and Family Sciences
Advisor: Ryan Watson, Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences

19. Memory Complaints and Depression Treatment in Older Adults
Margaret Lewerk, Allied Health Sciences
Advisor: Kevin Manning, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry

20. Interactions Between Key Brain Regions During Perception of Music
Zoe Schaefer, Biomedical Engineering
Advisor: Roeland Hancock, Assistant Research Professor, Psychological Sciences

21. Skin Pigmentation Variability in Baboons: Implications for Vitamin D Deficiency
Srishti Sadhir, Anthropology & Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Advisor: Sabrina Sholts, Curator of Biological Anthropology, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

22. Interrelationships Among Representational Formats of Number in School-Age Children
Caroline Hebert, Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences & Cognitive Science
Advisor: Marie Coppola, Associate Professor, Psychological Sciences

23. Treating Trauma: An Analysis of the Reactions to Shell Shock in Britain During and After World War I
Isabella Ferrante, History
Advisor: Meredith Rusoff, Adjunct Faculty, History
Advisor: Joel Blatt, Associate Professor, History

24. The Effect of Feedback on Ability to Understand an Object's History in Developing Children
Kristen Shubert, Allied Health Science
Advisor: Gerry Altmann, Professor, Psychological Sciences
25. Defining a Tachykininergic Projection to Melanin-Concentrating Hormone (MCH) Neurons in the Lateral Hypothalamic Area (LHA)
Lily Zhong, Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Alexander Jackson, Assistant Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

26. FISHing in the Eye: An Investigation into the Mechanisms of Axon Regeneration
Kathleen Renna, Diagnostic Genetic Sciences
Advisor: Ephraim Trakhtenberg, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience
Advisor: Judy Brown, Associate Professor in Residence, Allied Health Sciences
Advisor: Kenneth Campellone, Associate Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

27. Effect of Positive Interaction on Heart Rate Variability in the Parent and Child Emotions Study
Molly vanLuling, Molecular and Cell Biology & Nutritional Sciences
Advisor: Carolyn Greene, Assistant Professor, Psychiatry

28. Developing and Optimizing a Novel Model of Blast-Induced TBI
Emmalyn Lecky, Biological Sciences & Psychological Sciences
Alexela Hoyt, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology & Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Ephraim Trakhtenberg, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

29. Understanding Barriers to Patient Recruitment and Enrollment in Clinical Research: Keloid Study
Sarah Tsuruo, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Ernst Reichenberger, Professor, Center for Regenerative Medicine and Skeletal Development

30. Measuring the Effect of the Ketogenic Diet on Seizure-Like Activity (SLA) in a Drosophila melanogaster Model
Adeline Bray, Physiology and Neurobiology
Riccardo Fornari, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Geoffrey Tanner, Assistant Professor in Residence, Physiology and Neurobiology
31. Genetic Determinants of Ketone Body Effects on Post-TBI Aggression in Drosophila
Faria Mahjabin, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Geoffrey Tanner, Assistant Professor in Residence, Physiology and Neurobiology

32. Behavioral Screen to Test the Function of Candidate Olfactory Genes in Drosophila melanogaster
Tiffany Liang, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Karen Menuz, Assistant Professor, Physiology and Neurobiology

33. The Role of C1QL1 in the Maturation of Oligodendrocytes
Aubrey Surian, Molecular and Cell Biology & Psychological Sciences
Advisor: David Martinelli, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

34. Identifying Genes with a Role in the Reproductive Lifespan of C. elegans
Shannon Hanggodo, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Bojun Chen, Assistant Professor, Neuroscience

35. Investigating the Role of ULK-1 in Zika Virus Replication
Veolette Hanna, Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Penghua Wang, Assistant Professor, Immunology

36. PAD4: A Potential Biomarker for Gliosis in Age-Related Macular Degeneration
Humza Zaidi, Molecular and Cell Biology & Health Care Management
Advisor: Royce Mohan, Professor, Neuroscience

37. Evaluation of a Dietary Sphingosine on Gut Barrier Markers of Caco-2 Cells
Julia Colliton, Biological Sciences & Finance
Advisor: Christopher Blesso, Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences
38. Effect of c-MYC inhibition on the MCF7 Luminal A Breast Cancer Cell Line
Sarah Chen, Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Jeannine McCune, Professor, Population Sciences & Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center
Advisor: Victoria Seewaldt, Professor, Population Sciences, City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center

39. Phenotypic Analysis of Lgr6 Null Periosteal Cells
Matthew Wan, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Archana Sanjay, Assistant Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery

40. Rare Variants in the MC4R Gene are Associated with an Increased Risk of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD) and Insulin Resistance in Children and Adolescents with Obesity
Prabhath Mannam, Physiology and Neurobiology & Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Nicola Santoro, Assistant Professor, Pediatric Endocrinology, Yale School of Medicine

41. Mechanism of CD13 Mediated Tunneling Nanotube Formation in Endothelial Cells
Reileigh Fleeher, Physiology and Neurobiology
Advisor: Mallika Ghosh, Assistant Professor, Cell Biology & Center for Vascular Biology

42. Who Let the DoGs Out? An Analysis of RNA Transcription Readthrough and Termination
Roshni Mehta, Molecular and Cell Biology & French and Francophone Studies
Advisor: Leighton Core, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

43. The Genes in Frog Skin and Their Role in Evolutionary Innovation
Chenghong Deng, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Rachel O’Neill, Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: John Malone, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology
44. Analyzing Senescence Cells and Their Ability to Cause Insulin Resistance in Obese Mice
Lauren Barber, Allied Health Sciences
Advisor: Ming Xu, Assistant Professor, Genetics and Genome Sciences & Center on Aging

45. Characterization of Early Pre-mRNA Splicing Complexes in Trypanosoma brucei
Khaleel Rahman, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Arthur Günzl, Professor, Genetics and Genome Sciences

46. A Novel Biodegradable Piezoelectric Scaffold for Muscular Tissue Regeneration
Pooja Prasad, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Thanh Nguyen, Assistant Professor, Mechanical Engineering

47. Biodegradable Bone Fixation Devices for Load Bearing Fractures Utilizing Silk and Hydroxyapatite
Caroline Thompson, Biomedical Engineering
Advisor: Mei Wei, Dean, Russ College of Engineering and Technology, Ohio University

48. A User-Friendly Interface to Wirelessly Control Neuroprostheses
Helen Phu, Biomedical Engineering & Computer Science
Advisor: Martin Han, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

49. Optimization of Immunohistochemical Staining Methods in Rat Spinal Cord Tissue
Rohit Makol, Biomedical Engineering
Advisor: Martin Han, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

50. Crosstalk Detection Circuit for Microelectrode Arrays
Morgan McNamara, Biomedical Engineering
Advisor: Martin Han, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

51. Changes in the Gut Mycobiome of Multiple Sclerosis Patients
Saumya Shah, Computer Science
Advisor: Yanjiao Zhou, Assistant Professor, Medicine
52. Synthesis of Tethered Bichromophoric Voltage Sensitive Dye
Daniel Fairchild, Structural Biology and Biophysics & Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Ping Yan, Assistant Professor, Center for Cell Analysis & Modeling

53. Toxicity Analysis of DNA Adduct Deoxyguanosine-$N^2$-6-Aminopyrene in Escherichia coli
Emily Janeiro, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Ashis Basu, Professor, Chemistry

54. Less is More: Streamlining Glycosphingolipid Synthesis
Hao Xu, Chemistry
Advisor: Amy Howell, Professor, Chemistry

55. Synthesizing Polymer Nanocapsules Using Lipid Scaffolds for Enzyme Encapsulation
Victoria Bozhulich, Chemistry
Advisor: Eugene Pinkhassik, Associate Professor, Chemistry

56. Radiation Damage Recovery of PbWO4 Crystals with Optical Bleaching
Sean Oh, Physics
Advisor: Kyungseon Joo, Professor, Physics

57. Exploring Thermal Conductivity of Heat Treated Niobium at Cryogenic Temperatures to Produce More Efficient SRF Cavities
Donovan Davino, Physics
Advisor: Kyungseon Joo, Professor, Physics

58. Efficiency Measurements for HPGe Detectors
Megan Sturm, Physics
Advisor: Kyungseon Joo, Professor, Physics

59. Phase Field Modeling with Applications to Corrosion
Victoria Reichelderfer, Materials Science and Engineering
Advisor: Serge Nakhmanson, Associate Professor, Materials Science and Engineering
60. W-Band Dielectric Property Characterization of Yttria-Stabilized Zirconia at High Temperature
Lucas Enright, Materials Science and Engineering
Advisor: Brad Hoff, Senior Research Physicist, Air Force Research Laboratory

61. Possible Antimicrobial Properties of ERG 240 in Bacterial Sphingolipid Synthesis
Eric Mohan, Chemistry
Advisor: Nicholas Leadbeater, Associate Professor, Chemistry
Advisor: Dominic Campopiano, Professor, Chemistry and Chair of Industrial Biocatalysis, University of Edinburgh

Joseph Tracey, Materials Science and Engineering
Advisor: Jasna Jankovic, Assistant Professor, Materials Science and Engineering

63. Functional Classification of Known and Novel SNPs Associated with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia Predisposition
Helen Bian, Molecular and Cell Biology & Spanish
Advisor: Leighton Core, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cell Biology

64. Development of a Smartphone-Based Mobile DNA Diagnostic Device for Point-of-Care Diagnostics
Katrina Cirilli, Biomedical Engineering
Advisor: Changchun Liu, Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering

65. Engineering Intensiometric Sensors for Small Metabolites
Sarah Kricheff, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Yi Wu, Associate Professor, Genetics and Genome Sciences

66. Investigations of Abiotic Drivers of Microbial Community Dynamics in a Restored Freshwater Tidal Marsh
Paulina Frutos, Biological Sciences & Environmental Sciences
Advisor: Beth Lawrence, Assistant Professor, Natural Resources and the Environment
67. Data Curation and Integration of Georeferenced Forest Population Studies in the TreeGenes Database
Charles Demurjian, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Jill Wegrzyn, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

68. Development of an Open-Source, Web-Based Database Module for the Tripal Framework to Improve Eukaryotic Genome Annotation
Alyssa Ferreira, Molecular and Cell Biology & Pathobiology
Advisor: Jill Wegrzyn, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

69. EASEL: An Integrated and Accessible Framework for the Annotation of Eukaryotic Reference Genomes
Jeremy Bennett, Biomedical Engineering & Computer Science and Engineering
Advisor: Jill Wegrzyn, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

70. The Effects of Poor Maternal Nutrition During Gestation on Ewe and Offspring Plasma Concentrations of Leptin and Ghrelin
Lauren Soranno, Animal Science
Advisor: Sarah Reed, Associate Professor, Animal Science
Advisor: Steven Zinn, Professor, Animal Science

71. Effects of Restricted Maternal Nutrition and Realimentation During Gestation on the Fetal Progenitor Cell Population in Semitendinosus Muscle of Sheep
Micahela Mitchell, Animal Science
Advisor: Sarah Reed, Associate Professor, Animal Science

72. Poor Maternal Nutrition During Gestation Alters Placental IGF-I, IGF-II, and IGFBP-3 mRNA Expression in Sheep
Caitlyn Splaine, Animal Science
Advisor: Sarah Reed, Associate Professor, Animal Science
73. The Evolution of Gut Patterning in Tardigrades
Ariana Rojas, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Frank Smith, Assistant Professor, Biology, University of North Florida

74. Genetic Divergence following Establishment of a Barrier to Movement in Parapatric Populations of Threespine Stickleback
Gillian McNeil, Molecular and Cell Biology
Advisor: Daniel Bolnick, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

75. Watching Grass Grow: How Does Moisture Impact a Critical Plant-Fungal Symbiosis?
Laura Jones, Individualized Major: Biodiversity and Visual Media
Advisor: Robert Bagchi, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Advisor: Cora Lynn Deibler, Professor, Art and Art History

76. Stoichiometry of Fear: Do Predators Affect the Balance of Carbon and Nitrogen in Their Prey?
Annalee Mears, Marine Sciences
Advisor: Catherine Matassa, Assistant Professor, Marine Sciences

77. Is Applying Lactic Acid Bacteria a Viable Approach for Increasing Female Cannabis Flower Terpene Content?
Evert McKee, Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems
Advisor: Gerald Berkowitz, Professor, Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

78. Symbiont Replacement by Pathogenic Fungus in North American Dog-Day Cicadas
Jason Vailionis, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Advisor: Chris Simon, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

79. How the Use of Various Feeder and Seed Types Affect Bird Activity
Piper Stepule, Mathematics
Advisor: Chris Elphick, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
80. The Impact of Distance from a Stream on Color Morph Distributions of *Plethodon cinereus*, the Eastern Red-Backed Salamander
Sarah Baker, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Advisor: Elizabeth Jockusch, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

81. Effect of Forest Fragmentation on the Abundance of Deer Ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*)
Robert Lepore, Biological Sciences
Advisor: Sarah Knutie, Assistant Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Advisor: Miranda Davis, Assistant Professor in Residence, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

82. Are Predators and Pollution a Problem for Freshwater Ecosystems?
Amanda Pastore, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Advisor: Mark Urban, Professor, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
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Special Thanks

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Thomas C. Katsouleas, President, University of Connecticut

John A. Elliott, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

John Volin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Jennifer Lease Butts, Assistant Vice Provost, Enrichment Programs and Director, Honors Program

Student Volunteers for the Fall Frontiers Poster Exhibition

Office of Undergraduate Research Staff

Caroline McGuire, Executive Director, Enrichment Programs and Director, Office of Undergraduate Research

Melissa Berkey, Assistant Director

Liza Boritz, BOLD Program Director

Jodi Eskin, Program Coordinator

Rowena Grainger, Health Research Program Advisor

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