

SPRING SPOTLIGHT

ON RESEARCH

In April 2019, Kennesaw State University will host the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). This event will bring students across the nation to KSU to exhibit their work in presentations and posters as well as performances and visual arts displays.

While NCUR coming to KSU is new, KSU students have presented their extensive research at previous conferences. Theater and performance studies major LaTausha Carter presented during the 2018 NCUR in Edmond, Oklahoma, speaking about how the patriarchy affects women. The name of her work was "Acting Like a Woman: Patriarchy and the Performance of the Female Athlete."


When discussing her research and its importance, Carter said, "As human beings, we are constantly performing and watching how others perform throughout society. It takes a lens like theater to recognize how patriarchy is currently working in one's personal life. I truly loved working on this project, and I can't wait to see how far I will take it or it takes me." Similar to Carter, many students will have the chance to showcase their passion.

"Institutions that are chosen to host NCUR have a demonstrated track record of excellence in undergraduate research," said Amy Buddie director of KSU's Office of Undergraduate

National Conference on Undergraduate Research debuts at KSU

By Emily Deibler

Dylan Carter, a senior theater and performance studies major, is among a group of over 500 KSU students selected as 2019 NCUR presenters.



Research. "It is an honor that the Council on Undergraduate Research chose KSU as the host for NCUR 2019 – it's a testament to the hard work of countless faculty and students at KSU."

Beyond NCUR, undergraduate research has always been a crucial part of KSU, including providing support and guidance to students and their faculty mentors.

"We aim to make hands-on research and creative activity an integral part of the undergraduate experience at Kennesaw State University," explained Buddie. "For example, there is funding available to support undergraduate research, and the Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research in which KSU students can publish their scholarship."

Another way for students to get involved is through the Undergraduate Research Club (URC), a popular registered student organization which promotes undergraduate research and creative activity at the University through team-based research projects. Many of the members have also presented at NCUR and plan to participate in April.

KSU student Sharon Kaur has worked on obesity research, and the experience she gained helped her secure her position as URC secretary and then as president. This led to her studying the health behaviors of KSU first-year students and how their well-being correlated with their grades through a survey. Though Kaur was not able to get a sizable sample (she has estimated there were only about 40 students surveyed), this experience served as a learning moment for how to gather research information.

The following year, with the help of Buddie, Kaur learned how to engage with students through Sona, an online participant recruitment program available through the Department of Psychological Science website, which tremendously improved survey participation. She took her findings to NCUR, and described seeing the number of students there as "amazing"

since there are usually at least 3,000-4,000 attendees.

Anjie Adeyemo, current URC secretary, presented her work at KSU in spring 2018 on how race and geographic location affect the rates of infant mortality. Making her first appearance at NCUR 2019, Adeyemo believes research experience is vital, saying it has been valuable "being able to learn something new and being able to present something that you're passionate about."

Robbie Cronin, a chemistry major who serves as URC treasurer, presented at NCUR in 2018 over "phubbing," which means snubbing—ignoring—someone while on your cell phone. Through this survey-based URC project, he discovered that "phubbing" was more common in friendships than in romantic relationships. In addition, participants perceived that their friends and partners engaged in phubbing more than they did.

Now Cronin is working on researching whether activated charcoal can absorb organic components of gunpowder residue, which could help identify different types of residue. He is presenting on this topic at NCUR, though the research is in its beginning stages. With this work, he hopes to go to graduate school to study forensic chemistry.

URC Vice President Alyssa Venn loves reading about and conducting research, even changing her major from psychology to statistics because, with experience in statistical data, she can research anything. She has been to NCUR many times, and recommends that people attending should look at everything from the posters to the art displays, and encourages students to participate as presenters or viewers.

Already, many KSU students have shown their passion and drive at NCUR. In April, NCUR will bring many interesting research projects to the campus, and KSU's students will show off their hard work, much like they have in past years.